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THE CANDIDATE CONSTRUCTS A CAMPAIGN

Late Night With Jerry Brown

ALEXANDER COCKBURN
AND
ANDREW KOPKIND

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'I don't believe Clinton's going to get the nomination.' (Page 513)

EDITORIAL

PACKAGES WITH STRINGS

President Bush rushed to put out his Russian aid package announcement before Bill Clinton could make his speech in New York City on the same subject. This was the first sense of urgency Bush has shown on the issue; never underestimate the motive power of political opportunism. The proposals were so similar that the race ended up a tie.

Bush's program calls for about $4.5 billion in aid, most of it already authorized. Clinton seemed to call for somewhat less, but both favor working through the I.M.F. and making the money conditional on "reforms"—the Russians adopting a free market system—imposed quickly by "shock therapy."

LE PEN: HATE IN A WARM CLIMATE
DANIEL SINGER

THE EARTH SUMMIT
HERMANN SCHEER

ANGELA CARTER: SHAKESPEAREAN RAG
ANN SNITOW

FAMILY ALBUM
DAVID FUTRELLE

No one appears to be concerned about a possible backlash to such wrenching change, which could sweep away the new and fragile class of democrats and entrepreneurs. And if the people go through a protracted period of pain for a program stamped "Made in the West," what kind of relationship can the United States have with the next generation?

Virtually every industry in the former Soviet Union is owned by the state, including those that make things like baby formula and medicines. Neither the United States nor the I.M.F. wants to aid these crumbling "socialist" remnants. It will take a generation for private enterprises to replace them. Who'll produce those goods in the meantime? The West should give generous help, without an ideological straitjacket and on the understanding that Russians know better than the I.M.F. how to move toward democracy and a pluralistic economy.

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EXCHANGE.

'RAPE MEANS RAPE'

Ann Arbor, Mich.

I found the opening headline, "The Lie That Wouldn't Die," on Jon Wiener's article " 'Rape by Innuendo' at Swarthmore" [Jan. 20] curious. Surely, "embarrassing truth" would be more accurate, or perhaps "disturbing fact." As Wiener writes, "Swarthmore is significant because it led the country in developing a program to reduce date rape," and the discussion guide for that program, intended for use after students viewed the date-rape video, included the sentence, "Acquaintance rape as will be discussed spans a spectrum of incidents and behaviors ranging from crimes legally defined as rape to verbal harassment and inappropriate innuendo."

Wiener tells us that the former student who wrote the sentence now says it wasn't meant to mean what it unambiguously means. That's nice, but in journalism, we don't call quoting accurately what an individual wrote and a group printed and distributed "a lie" just because they take it back when it proves embarrassing. I wrote my column, of which Wiener quotes a half-sentence, because I believe it is very dangerous to lead students to believe that date rape is anything less than rape, which is a crime of violence. If rape means everything—violent assault or dirty joke, emotional pressure or consensual heterosexual sex—it means nothing. Feminists worked hard to make the case that rape by an acquaintance, even rape by a past or possible sexual partner, is not a lesser offense than rape by a stranger. "No means no" and date rape means rape. I put "so-called" in front of the word feminist because I believe those who trivialize rape are betraying feminism.

Of course, I disagree with Wiener's conclusion that by attacking the "innuendo" sentence journalists portrayed date rape as "an insignificant, foolish issue." It was the Swarthmore students who unwittingly did that. But Wiener doesn't just disagree on the relevance of the belatedly disavowed discussion guide. He concludes with the "disturbing fact" that the attack on "rape by innuendo" was led by women. "The lesson: Women journalists can go far if they attack feminism." In other words, we don't really believe what we say. We've sold out our sisters for our own sordid careers. I resent this attack on my integrity. My views may be wrong; they are my views. *Joanne Jacobs*

'WACKY'

New York City

I received Swarthmore's infamous "Acquaintance Rape Prevention Workshop" guidelines (source of the quote I have supposedly used so unfairly) in winter 1990 from a student counselor at the University of Chicago who had called other universities requesting suggestions for starting a campus date-rape-awareness seminar. Thus, whether they were "school policy" or not (and how much social phenomena makes it into official school policy?) the guidelines were out in the world—being studied, imitated. Apparently someone at Swarthmore thought them presentable enough to send to other schools. I thought the guidelines were worth quoting because (official policy or not) they were—and still are—a good example of the kind of wacky definitions in play.

Also, why is being critical of unskeptical reporting and pack thinking "attacking feminism"? Are you saying that any attempt to analyze, to question, to read cultural phenomena is necessarily an attempt to "degrade," to "defame"? Now, you guys really *are* the thought police. *Stephanie Gutmann*

NO & YES

Lewisburg, Pa.

Jon Wiener is skeptical of Stephanie Gutmann's statement in *Playboy* that "forty-three percent of the women classified as rape victims had not realized they'd been raped." In fact, Gutmann has accurately reported one finding of the most reliable study of acquaintance rape; it is only her slant that is peculiar. The figure comes from a survey of thousands of students nationwide by psychologist Mary Koss, using thorough sampling procedures and a carefully developed anonymous questionnaire. The survey revealed that 43 percent of the women who reported having had an experience that met the legal definition of rape (as codified in Ohio's statutes) did not label that experience rape; that is, many women who answered no to the question, Have you ever been raped? answered yes to one of a list of questions about whether they had had intercourse against their will with a man who used force or the threat of force, or rendered her unable to consent through plying her with alcohol. The likely reason that many of these women thought they hadn't been raped is that they believed that coercive sex is not the same as rape if the victim knows her attacker.

Chris O'Sullivan

'NEO-VICTORIAN' FEMINISTS

Middleton, N.J.

In a recent book about feminism and the younger generation, *Feminist Fatale*, Paula Kamen writes admiringly of an acquaintance-rape workshop organizer who believes that only an explicit "yes" constitutes consent: "In cases without this consent, and when the woman is experiencing any doubt, he labels the situation as rape. This definition sticks even when force is not used and the woman does not struggle." Last April a Rutgers University administrator was quoted in the campus newspaper, *The Daily Targum*, as saying that in order to end acquaintance rape, men had to learn to stop all sexual advances, including what she called "salesmanship," once a woman said no.

Criticism of the neo-Victorian, men-are-beasts ideology that has unfortunately pervaded much feminist discourse is not necessarily antifeminist. Indeed, as a feminist, I find most disturbing this ideology's implication that women must be protected from male lust. As a journalist, I am also disturbed by Wiener's own innuendo that women who dissent from the prevailing brand of feminism are merely trying to advance their careers. Well, Anna Quindlen and Maureen Dowd, to name just two, have gone pretty far promoting feminism. *Cathy Young*

WIENER REPLIES

Irvine, Calif.

Stephanie Gutmann published three articles centered on a single awkwardly worded sentence written eight years ago by a Swarthmore undergraduate, Jan Boswinkel. In Boswinkel's suggestions for date-rape workshops, he wrote that discussion should not be limited to forced acts of sexual penetration but should include a spectrum of behavior ranging from "inappropriate innuendo" to violent stranger rape. Gutmann and others who relied on her, including *Time*, *Newsweek*, *New York* and *U.S. News & World Report*, used that reference to "inappropriate innuendo" to ridicule date-rape-awareness programs. Gutmann defends her work in her letter, but she took a different line when interviewed by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on January 16: The "inappropriate innuendo" story she started, she said, was "sort of like the telephone game. Things get fuzzier and fuzzier."

None of the people I could find who work in date-rape programs at Swarthmore and elsewhere believe or teach that inappropriate innuendo is rape. Why would Gutmann and Joanne Jacobs continue to focus myopically on Boswinkel's eight-year-old phrase instead of reporting on the work of date-rape programs? Because ridiculing feminist programs like Swarthmore's fulfills an ideological agenda; it's one small part of the backlash against women that Susan Faludi has documented so chillingly.

Thanks to Chris O'Sullivan for explaining another incomprehensible point in Gutmann's *Playboy* article.

Cathy Young's out-of-context quotations raise interesting issues. The man who argues that only a "freely given 'yes' constitutes consent," Joe Weinberg, does not make policy or enforce rules at any college or university; he is a freelance "rape prevention educator" who speaks around the country at fraternities, talking about the pressure to "score," "no matter what the cost to the woman—or to his own conscience." Does Young think that's a bad thing to tell frat boys? She suggests that it is part of a "neo-Victorian" effort to ruin sex. But the goal of date-rape programs is not to ruin sex; as Swarthmore student Sara Waterman said, "The goal of the program is to improve it." *Jon Wiener*

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EDITORIALS.

Dark Victory

If movies describe or express aspects of the culture that makes them, then hit movies must say it in a very loud voice. Sometimes the message is indisputably clear: *Saturday Night Fever* was as perfect an evocation of the 1977 *Zeitgeist* as *The Best Years of Our Lives* was of the spirit of 1946—always allowing for the Hollywood fantasy factor. So it must mean something that the Academy Awards this spring were swept by a movie about one serial killer who's a cannibal and another who prances around in drag, murders young women and makes fashion statements with their skin.

The Silence of the Lambs has grossed—literally—$130.7 million so far and will make millions more courtesy of the Academy, which is a lot of validation for a piece that trumpets sadomasochism, homophobia, misogyny and worse. The critics say that the yucky stuff in *Lambs* is beside the point; it's a brilliantly directed and acted film and a classic of its genre. Appeals of their decision should be made to Jean-Luc

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Godard, who said in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, number something-or-other, "Morality is a tracking shot." In other words, technique is truth, process is product.

Meanwhile, audiences get off on the depiction of cruelty to women and attendant horrors. And that at the moment when the conservative family-values crowd, assisted by some feminists, is preparing legislation that would make purveyors of pornography liable for damages sought by victims of sexual violence. Does Orion Pictures (which is in bankruptcy court and can ill afford litigation) get sued by every Jill or Jane who is skinned alive by a flaming transvestite? There are contradictions here that cry out for a good screenwriter.

Chief among them on awards night was the appearance of Jodie Foster, who must be counted the new queen regnant in Hollywood. With her two leading-lady Oscars on the shelf, her picture on the cover of *Time*, her director's credits, her critical as well as popular standing and of course her Armani pantsuit, she's the hottest thing in the industry since Katharine Hepburn. La Foster is hardly unaware of the charges of sexism hurled at *Lambs*, and her acceptance speech pointedly praised the "strong feminist hero" she portrayed as F.B.I. trainee Clarice Starling. The audience, primed for a feminist moment by repeated allusions to the omission of Barbra Streisand's name from the Best Director list, went wild.

Feminist hero, sadomasochistic cannibal: The cultural signifiers tumble into a blur. Perhaps that's the message *Lambs* bleats, that we are aswim in the undifferentiated drink of violence, struggle and survival, with no moral guideposts except our inner strength and the next tracking shot. And Hollywood says, Hey, it's a wonderful life.

Icy Is Dicey

With frightening regularity, airplanes crash or nearly crash because of faulty de-icing. The USAir flight that plunged into Flushing Bay on March 22 just after takeoff at New York's La Guardia Airport, killing twenty-seven people, appears to be the latest. In the past decade, the tragedy was repeated with Air Florida (1982), Continental (1987), United Express (1989), Air Ontario (1989) and Ryan International (1991). The real tragedy is that none of those accidents had to happen.

According to a former Pan Am inspector with thirty years' experience, almost all major airports in Scandinavia have been using a foolproof system for the past ten years or so. Instead of being de-iced at the gate, as is common at U.S. airports, airplanes proceed to the end of the taxiways, where they are de-iced just before moving to the runway for takeoff. There is no need to de-ice twice or even three times while aircraft wait at the gate for clearance from the control tower. And pilots are not asked to make judgment calls about whether their planes should be de-iced again. Aware that this system is far superior to current practice, the Air Line Pilots Association recommended as far back as 1982 that it be adopted.

The USAir co-pilot, John Rachuba, who survived the crash, insists he checked for ice as many as ten times before takeoff and saw none. But according to Charles Miller, a former official with the National Transportation Safety Board, such eyeballing is faulty at best, as it is almost impossible to see ice on the wings from the cockpit, especially on a snowy night. Moreover, the aircraft's tail surface, which is critical for providing lift at the earliest moment of takeoff, can't be seen at all.

Since the system used in northern Europe is so superior and hardly a secret, why haven't U.S. airports and airlines done the obvious? The Pan Am inspector says it's the old story of dollars and cents. For airports, it would mean a costly investment because they need both the equipment and a drainage system at the end of the various taxiways to catch the de-icing fluid, glycol, so the runoff does not seep into the ground or the water table. Airlines, like airports, also take the cheapest way out, which is to do the procedure with their own crews, at the gate. They water down the glycol to whatever level they think will do the job (glycol is usually diluted, but it can vary as much as 70-30, 60-40 or 50-50). Obviously, the less glycol, the fewer dollars. Although this carries some risk, it is no more than countless other risks the airlines take every day, says the inspector.

If de-icing were done at the taxiway, the service should be performed by one contractor, because if every airline had trucks moving about the area there would be chaos. And the contractor providing the service would surely use a maximum-strength solution, so as to take no chances and avoid lawsuits. The inspector also notes that taxiway de-icing might not cost that much more, because airlines would not have to de-ice more than once. However, it's still business as usual for U.S. airlines and airports. And passengers can take comfort that it's spring.

BARBARA KOEPPEL

Barbara Koeppel is a journalist based in Washington, D.C. Her research on airline safety was funded by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism.

Damming Ecology

A rafting expedition down the Usumacinta (Mayan for "River of the Sacred Monkey") is a peak wilderness experience. In addition to spectacular waterfalls and canyons, the Usumacinta boasts two classical Mayan sites: Yaxchilán on its Mexican shore and Piedras Negras on the Guatemalan side. For a fifty-mile stretch between Frontera Echevarría and Tenosique, the river banks are solid walls of tropical forest full of giant mahoganies, ceibas and cedars. In the past decade as loggers, slash-and-burn homesteaders and cattle ranchers have overrun southern Mexico's Lacandón forest and northern Guatemala's Petén, fugitive scarlet macaws, harpy eagles, howler and spider monkeys, jaguars and other endangered animals have sought refuge along the banks of the Usumacinta.

Today, scarcely three years after an international outcry defeated a dam proposed by Mexico and Guatemala, the monster is back. This time Mexico proposes to erect a "limited" hydroelectric facility on its territorial waters, about thirty-five kilometers upriver from Guatemala's Piedras Negras (Guatemalan guerrillas threaten to sabotage any dam on their terri-

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tory). Even a dam of moderate dimensions would flood fifteen square kilometers of the Usumacinta basin and its mahogany forests; it would also wreak havoc on the river's fish and crocodile populations and wipe out or displace the animals that have concentrated along its banks. The forest areas affected by the dam would include Piedras Negras and its unexcavated altars, temples and acropolis; worse yet, an ecological chain reaction would ultimately reach Mayan communities and thousands of animal and plant species within the largest continental rain forest north of Amazonia.

In response to a renewed alarm by archeologists and environmentalists, Mexico's Federal Electricity Commission, which on March 1 had announced its plans to build a dam, issued cautious denials. The commission's director, Guillermo Guerrero Villalobos, now says that feasibility studies will continue for another two years. Villalobos's demurrals are hedged by his assumption that within a year or two the mounting demands for electricity will override environmental constraints.

On February 25 Guatemala's technocrat President, Jorge Serrano Elías, pleaded with Mexico's visiting President Carlos Salinas de Gortari to build a binational hydroelectric facility on the Usumacinta to meet Guatemala's growing need for electricity. Guatemala's Chixoy hydroelectric dam, a notorious disaster, was built in the early 1980s at a cost of $1.5 billion, a sum that nearly matched the country's foreign debt. After military, government and private contractors had lined their pockets, the huge dam on the Chixoy River was so shabbily constructed that its tunnel has to be reinforced every two years to keep it from collapsing. The dam's basin is almost entirely deforested, adding siltation to the mounting problems of Chixoy, whose working life will be a fraction of what its designers projected. With more than 80 percent of the country's population in extreme poverty, Guatemala's nascent environmental conscience is a hostage to hunger.

President Salinas has been more sensitive to the environment. In February he helicoptered into Yaxchilán to deliver the closing address of an international conference on biodiversity. He announced the expansion of the nearby Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve by an additional 136,000 acres and vowed to balance Mexico's ecological and economic needs. For all his posturing as the region's "Environmental President," however, Salinas envisions a wide-ranging exploitation of Mexico's natural resources—including development of the Usumacinta's hydroelectric potential. Apparently, Salinas has yet to approach the large international credit agencies for funding. The World Bank's Mexico representative, Eugene McCarthy, says the bank will move very slowly on any such request, and will insist on thoroughgoing environmental impact studies before considering a loan to build a dam.

There is no question that any hydroelectric facility of whatever size poses a direct threat to the Usumacinta and its diverse and unique ecosystem. The demands for electricity will lead inevitably to the installation of a second or third dam, with the consequent flooding of Piedras Negras and of Yaxchilán, the beautifully preserved jewel of Mayan civilization. Beyond that, the dam would sound the death knell not only for this magnificent wild river but for what remains of Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve and Mexico's Lacandón forest.

The approaching Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro [see Hermann Scheer, page 522] will be an ideal place to press for cancellation of the dam on the Usumacinta and to encourage Mexico and Guatemala to explore alternative sources of energy while the blueprints are still on the drawing board.

VICTOR PERERA

Victor Perera, author of Rites: A Guatemalan Boyhood *and the forthcoming* Unfinished Conquest: The Guatemalan Tragedy, *recently returned from an expedition on the Usumacinta.*

NATION FRIENDS

Ralph Shikes, who died last week, wrote books on art when he was not on a peace vigil or overseeing his political-humanist newsletter "The Washington Spectator" or helping *The Nation*—in words of advice and in deed. He viewed social injustice with an indignant eye, the apt title of his unique book on political caricature (*The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the 15th Century to Picasso*). We miss him already, as we do Ola Lyon, who also died last week and who was the spirited secretary of three *Nation* editors from 1974 through 1984; and as we do Gertrude Silverston, our bookkeeper from 1981 to 1985, who died February 29.

★

THE NEW JERRY BROWN

When he was young, and serving St. Ignatius,
He was, by his vocation, kindly, gracious.
Converting at the speed of MS-DOS,
Embracing every sort of mishegoss,
He still stayed kind. When he campaigned for guv
Republicans were worthy of his love.
All human beings were blessed, not just condoned.
These hippies can be sweet, when they're not stoned.
Why, even as a party boss, I'd bet
He sweetly *stroked the fattest cats, and yet*
In this campaign, this sordid travelogue,
He now acts meaner than a junkyard dog.
He wasn't mean while curled up like a lotus—
Or straightened up it's easier to notice.

Calvin Trillin

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Dances With Chickens

Nothing is more diverting than the sweat of panic on the brows of the Clinton claque at the thought that somehow it won't work out, that there won't be a coronation at the Democratic National Convention, that the candidate they laboriously assembled over the past four years has the shelf life of one of those battery chickens put out by Tyson, one of the Arkansas Governor's major backers.

Even if Governor Chicken does finally make it in one piece to Madison Square Garden in July, his certainly won't have been that royal progress augured in the edition of *Newsweek* that hit the stands seconds before Jerry Brown won the Connecticut primary. Full frontal of Governor Chicken's face on the cover, full page of Gov. and Mrs. Chicken on the inside, waving joyously in front of the American flag. Reams of worshipful prose from Eleanor Clift about Governor Chicken's comeback from the January scandals, February scandals, March scandals.

The big-time political correspondents float along beneath their zeppelins of hot air, oblivious to the fact that the Clinton candidacy might suddenly explode like the Hindenburg. For them Governor Chicken is so much the *beau idéal* of a Democratic candidate that they are incapable of taking in the fact that most sensible people have come to regard him as a slimeball, and a stupid one at that.

"I didn't inhale," said Governor Chicken apropos smoking a joint at Oxford. As the man said, Can't he do anything right?

Clinton Cocaine Scares

Voters these days don't worry too much about marijuana, though they didn't care for Clinton's tricky way of owning up to it. But they do mind about cocaine. In Arkansas speculation about Clinton's cocaine use is common, along with assertions that the Governor hung out with people who used coke. On one such account, some in his security staff have jokingly referred to him as "the snowman." So sensitive are Clinton's damage controllers to this issue that they draw attention to the very problem they seek to conceal.

On March 30 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Betsey Wright, a campaign aide, had volunteered that Clinton had never used cocaine or been in places where he knew it was being used. The *Times* had called the campaign only in connection with the case of Dan Lasater, an Arkansas bond dealer under investigation as part of a drug sting at a time when Clinton pushed a profitable state bond issue his way. Lasater, who ultimately did time on a cocaine charge before being pardoned by Clinton, was a friend of the Governor's brother, Roger, who also fell afoul of the law over cocaine.

Wright said that she "decided it was best to go ahead and put the issue on the table" because she heard rumors people were trying to associate Clinton with cocaine.

Another story that makes Clinton's damage controllers tense concerns Mena, the town and airstrip in western Arkansas whose involvement in international drug trafficking and covert operations has been detailed over the past two months in this column. In a recent debate with Jerry Brown in New York, Clinton promised to be tough with drug-importing countries and vigilant in monitoring suspicious movements of planes in and out of the United States.

Yet for at least two years Clinton has done nothing to assist investigators on the trail of drug dealers and money launderers in his state. (One alleged launderer, conspicuous in Arkansas's politico-financial world and profitably involved in state business, was—according to a source whose information has proved reliable in the past—in receipt of large sums of drug money from Barry Seal, the smuggler and D.E.A. informant based at Mena in the 1980s.)

My colleague Bryce Hoffman called the Clinton campaign and asked his spokeswoman, Max Parker, why Clinton had never responded to the 1990 request of deputy prosecutor Charles Black for assistance in forwarding a state inquiry into the "rather wide array of illegal activities" centered around Mena. Black, whose jurisdiction includes Mena, suspected a federal cover-up of activities there.

Now Parker maintains that Black was a subordinate in the prosecutor's office and that Clinton went to the top. She claims that Clinton told State Police commander Tommy Goodwin that he would allow $25,000 to be released to the chief prosecutor in Black's district, Joe Hardagree. Hardagree, says Parker, was then presented by Goodwin with Clinton's offer but rejected it, presumably (according to Parker) because $25,000 was insufficient for such a probe.

But in our possession is a letter Hardagree wrote in January 1992 to Mark Swaney of the Arkansas Committee:

> During my tenure as prosecuting attorney, I did not receive $25,000 in State funds, or any part of this amount of money, nor did I hear anything concerning these State funds, from Colonel Goodwin or anyone at Arkansas State Police or anyone in the governor's office. The only investigation that I am aware of which has expended funds or resources has been the Grand Jury investigation of the Federal Court for the Western District of Arkansas.

Finally, Bryce asked Parker about another $25,000, appropriated by Congress in October of last year upon the intervention of Arkansas Representative Bill Alexander, which has been languishing in State Police headquarters. Parker said that it was just a matter of completing some paperwork and that we should talk to Tommy Goodwin.

We called Goodwin and elicited a response that, so far as officials in the state governed by Clinton are concerned, is becoming familiar at this stage in the campaign. Whereas in previous conversations Goodwin had been helpful and easy-going, now he is hesitant, measuring every word. Where once he was enthusiastic about the resumption of an investigation, now he says that he's not sure there would be any "value" to it, and adds that even if it is to proceed, the chief Mena investigator—who now appears to be guarded from reporters' inquiries by his superiors in the Attorney General's office—would not have subpoena power.

Asked about the statements from the Clinton campaign

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and Goodwin, Hardagree told us this week that "what I said in the letter stands." Of the discrepancy between his memory and Goodwin's, Hardagree said, "These are all good people, but they are too involved in politics. . . . I think the world of Tommy [Goodwin], but someone's put the heat on him."

The bottom line is that at least in Parker's story about Black's request the Clinton campaign is lying—in effect, promoting a cover-up of the cover-up. In the second case we return to our original question of why, if Bill Clinton is so concerned about drug traffic into this country, has he done nothing to hurry justice forward?

The Jerry Brown Hate Campaigners

Meanwhile, the full fury of the liberal establishment, all the way from Anthony Lewis to Doug Henwood, via Mount Moynihan, is being turned on Jerry Brown. Brown, cried Lewis, is interested only in personal power. Brown, squeaked Michael Kinsley, is the consummate opportunist. Brown, Henwood confided to the readers of his *Left Business Observer*, is a "Zen fascist."

For Lewis to call Brown opportunistically power-hungry was odd given that the columnist's aim was clearly to stress the selfless addiction to the public weal of Governor Chicken, who, never let it be forgotten, sought to get the spotlight off his sex life by rushing to Arkansas on January 24 to preside over the execution of a black man, Rickey Ray Rector, who had killed two cops and then shot himself, destroying part of his brain. Rector had no idea what death was. A couple of hours before his execution—in the course of which he lay screaming in pain as the man took fifty minutes to locate a vein for injecting the lethal toxin—he said he would vote for Clinton in the fall. That'll make a nice tableau in the Halloween parade.

"In his long public career," wrote Kinsley, "Jerry Brown never expressed any interest in election finance reform or tax simplification." Brown responds irritably: "How can he even say that? Finance reform was my campaign platform when I ran for Secretary of State [in California] in 1970."

Of course, Brown's done his share of buckling under the pressure of the money power in the form of agribusiness and other outcrops of the economic landscape of California. Like any politician, he has his measure of opportunism. He can entertain foolish ideas like the enterprise zones he was pushing in a debate with Clinton, even though the Mondragón co-op model he invokes in a conversation with myself and Andrew Kopkind in this issue suggests a much better way to develop manufacturing. But this doesn't explain the zeal of most reporters and columnists to belittle his candidacy.

By the admittedly low standards of political life, Brown has one of the most consistent records in U.S. politics when it comes to basic outlook and instinct. Brown today finds a constituency among many labor organizers (though not the big-time labor establishment) aghast at Clinton's espousal of right-to-work laws and fast-track negotiations with Mexico. And Brown can point to a long, consistent record, from laws on collective bargaining for public sector employees to support for farmworkers. When Clinton was collecting his first gubernatorial campaign contributions from Arkansas's big food processors and retailers, Brown was setting up his strike force seeking to protect the wage standards of immigrant workers, in furniture, garment and kindred sweatshops.

These days every candidate says he is for a clean environment. Even Clinton, who has waved a green lamp to business polluters in Arkansas, has the effrontery to maintain it. Brown, through eight years as Governor of California, set a pioneering agenda on toxic substances. He started the crucial Cancer Registry (whose demise California's Governor Pete Wilson now seeks) whereby pollution can be linked to its consequences. He inaugurated the occupational health and safety centers on University of California campuses to monitor workplace dangers. No politician did more to set the agenda on energy conservation, or was more vigorous in combating the nuclear power industry. His record shows he has cared about and worked for the rights of working people and for the poor. No governor had a better record on enlightened appointments, particularly of women.

The ultimate joke is the attack on Brown's flat-tax plan. The Democratic establishment is savaging it as a giveaway to the rich. Pundits like Henwood have been intoning measured words of praise for the "progressivity" of the present system. They should remember the words of one expert, Leona Helmsley, a real estate tycoon's wife now facing prison for tax evasion, who once exclaimed, "Only the little people pay taxes."

Most of the attacks on the plan derive from a harsh assessment by the Citizens for Tax Justice (C.T.J.), a supposedly nonpartisan liberal public interest group. Every critic, from *The New York Times* to the aforementioned Henwood, basically lifted whole cloth what C.T.J. said, without further inquiry. As the economist Robert Pollin of the University of California at Riverside easily established, C.T.J., without making this clear to the reader, built $1.3 trillion worth of exemptions—equal to nearly a quarter of the current G.N.P.—into Brown's plan and then denounced this scheme of its own manufacture as one that would increase the deficit by $200 billion. In other ways, C.T.J. similarly rewrote Brown's plan.

Everything that touches the Clinton campaign turns sleazy. C.T.J.'s former executive director, David Wilhelm, is now Clinton's campaign manager. C.T.J. staffer Mike Attlinger says that yes, Wilhelm has called to "lobby us" from time to time. On March 27 the *Chicago Sun-Times* published an A.P. interview with C.T.J.'s present executive director, Robert McIntyre, in which he called Brown's plan "the most crazy right-wing proposal that anybody's made in anyone's memory."

Back on July 19, 1982, McIntyre wrote in *The New Republic*: "The growing fascination [with the flat tax] deserves some serious attention. . . . if the flat taxers succeed in promoting a public debate about the benefits of a loophole-less tax code, they will have performed a useful service for the economy and for tax fairness."

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Realty Reality

EDWARD SOREL

Y'SEE? YOU WERE WRONG ABOUT LEONA HELMSLEY NEVER GOING TO JAIL. SHE HAS TO SURRENDER HERSELF ON APRIL 1ST.
I HEARD.
BUT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THE COURT COULD RULE THAT HER HUSBAND WAS TOO SENILE TO STAND TRIAL.
WHO CAN UNDERSTAND COURTS?
BUT HARRY HELMSLEY IS STILL RUNNING HIS $4 BILLION REAL ESTATE BUSINESS AND STILL MAKES DECISIONS EACH DAY THAT INVOLVE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.
SO?
SO HOW CAN HE BE SENILE?!!
THE COURT DIDN'T CALL HIM SENILE EXACTLY... THEY SAID HE COULDN'T DEFEND HIMSELF BECAUSE HE DIDN'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG...
...AND IN THE REAL ESTATE BUSINESS THAT'S UTTERLY UNNECESSARY.
Edward Sorel

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ARTICLES.

CONSTRUCTING A CAMPAIGN

Late Night With Jerry Brown

ALEXANDER COCKBURN AND ANDREW KOPKIND

Jerry Brown's victory in the Connecticut primary on March 24 transformed the contest for the Democratic presidential nomination. What had been a protest candidacy, "a dog nipping at the heels of the frontrunner," as a TV commentator said derisively, was suddenly a powerful part of the electoral equation. At the same time, Brown's message, an evolving corpus of ideas and sentiments, assumed the stature of a genuine political project, ripe for exposition and analysis.

The momentum of Connecticut propelled the former Governor of California into the New York campaign, traditionally the Elysium—or the graveyard—of Democratic candidates. Before the final tallies were issued from Hartford, Brown went on ABC's *Nightline* with Bill Clinton for an hourlong session. The next morning he was up for NBC's *Today Show*; then aboard Amtrak to Philadelphia ("The same trip was faster a hundred years ago," he said) for a speech to a cheering A.F.L.-C.I.O. convention; and then on a chartered prop plane bound for Albany and a chat with Mario Cuomo, who pointedly backtracked from his prediction that Clinton would sew up the nomination before the New York primary. Returning to the Albany airport, Brown's motorcade was hijacked by local supporters and the city police for a meeting with the Mayor, which the advance people had wanted to skip for reasons of time. He was aloft again soon enough for an appearance in Utica, and then headed back to Manhattan for an early-evening spot on *Larry King Live*.

With his staff wilting but gamely carrying on, and only a lone N.Y.P.D. plainclothesman for security, Brown charged into the Ritz music club (formerly Studio 54) for an onstage gig with the B-52's, Kim Basinger and Richie Havens (the ticket price was $20). Exiting through a back door into a swirling soup of reporters, fans and N.F.L.-size doormen, Brown was met by two of the most important progressive union leaders in the country, the Communications Workers' Jan Pierce and hospital workers Local 1199's Dennis Rivera, both of whom had paid their $20 to get to Brown. Pierce described his role as a "liaison" to the campaign; Rivera and his union had not yet endorsed any candidate.

With Brown in the lead car, the N.Y.P.D. man following and the labor leaders in a third, our little caravan circled Midtown before settling on the Carnegie Deli, which Brown remembered served his favorite "little pickles in a bowl on the table." Pierce and Rivera spent an hour and a half with Brown, off the record, suggesting strategies for the New York campaign and setting the ground rules for the March 30 announcement that 1199 would back Brown.

At a quarter past midnight, the Governor rocked back slightly in his chair and began a talk with *The Nation*.

ADK: *How do you think your campaign has developed strategically since January? Back then I asked whether you had a plan, an overall strategy for putting together the pieces of a campaign. You hardly talked about specific proposals. Is there a Brown campaign now?*

JB: There really is a campaign. In 1976, when I had Mickey Kantor as my campaign manager, who's Clinton's chairman now, the idea was that you have a few people, you raise a pot of money, you go out there as the governor and the same cast of characters shows up for the lunch; you get the money, you buy the TV ads, you get the organizers, you have some rallies and hoopla and maybe beat Carter in several primaries. But then you come back three months later and it's like spent champagne. There's no verve anymore.

Now there's been a natural coming together of constituencies and the filling of a hole that's not being filled by politics today. Wherever we go, we have groups of people, and that's something we didn't have before. We talk to them, we stay in their homes. So there are groups of people all over the country who have the experience of actually making a contribution. They're not just observers, they're participants—what I like to call moral agents of change.

ADK: *You didn't have the flat tax idea when you started.*
JB: Everybody this year wants to know what to do about taxes, and I thought all the tax games were just pure gimmicks. And there were Clinton and Tsongas debating about things that are so marginal, including the capital gains tax, in terms of having a real impact on the economy. Originally, I started with Moynihan's idea of reducing the payroll tax, but that didn't seem very effective. But to revamp the whole thing struck me as an idea that would have impact in terms of stimulus, savings, investment, and also relate to reform, since the banquet feast of corruption, as I call it, is fed by the writing of loopholes. The whole system functions under the guise of this graduated income tax, which then becomes the backdrop for all the deals.

AC: *The genesis of the flat tax is with the conservative economists Hall and Rabushka, who acknowledge their debt to Milton Friedman for the idea. Did you first read their book?*
JB: I read an article about them; I've read the book since.

ADK: *Did you talk to Jude Wanniski, the great supply-side propagandist of the Reagan years?*
JB: I did. His thing was to abolish the capital gains tax—his one note—and intellectually I can't believe that having no capital gains tax and leaving everything else in place is going to be big enough. Then when I talked with the economist Lester Thurow, he said you'd have to move to a value added tax, to tax consumption. I remember telling him: "Oh, so you're saying, if you have all this money [from reduced taxes], you

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don't get taxed on it until you spend it and as long as you leave it in the bank then everyone's using it and that brings down interest rates. Is that what you mean, Lester?" So I said, well Thurow's for a VAT, and a flat tax will pay for everything. Why not do it?

AC: *You say this plan is a silver bullet—which, by the way, is what Dan Quayle calls Bush's plan to lower the capital gains tax, "the silver bullet to save the economy"——*
JB: I'd better get another name.

AC: *But how does a flat tax solve the structural problems of the economy? It doesn't deal with speculative investment, doesn't address high long-term interest rates. It's no accident Wanniski's name comes up; through his prism of the supply side everything could be seen and resolved. You say the market's going to go up, manufacturing will come back, the lion is going to lie down with the lamb——*
JB: But I also say you've got to have a coalition with labor, promising to give labor the tools to appropriate their just share.

'There's a class that is immunizing itself from the changes it's requiring of the rest of the economy.'

AC: *But suppose you added elements to your plan. Suppose you exempted food from the 13 percent VAT and put the VAT on exports, which you exempt? Why the benefit to exporters?*
JB: Isn't that what they all do in Europe?

AC: *I don't know what they all do, but why do it here? Why not a benefit to poor people? It would be better than revenue neutral. You'd lose the $595 billion in revenues on food but put back $625 billion in taxes on exports. So you take food out of it. Medicine's already out because of your single-payer health insurance plan——*
ADK: *Clinton lost his activist support in Arkansas because he opposed the referendum repealing the sales tax on food and prescription drugs. Why don't you hit him for that?*
JB: We haven't gotten into that debate.

AC: *You could also exempt the first $15,000 of income from the flat tax. Or did you say that today?*
JB: I said we had to equalize it somehow, provide earned income credits, use the expenditure side.

AC: *Or say there's a cap on your deductions on home mortgage interest, like $25,000?*
JB: I think that should be in the plan, except that I haven't said it yet. That would make it more progressive.

AC: *And why not a wealth tax? Say, on net assets of more than $800,000.*
JB: Is that constitutional? I raised it once with Harkin, I said, "Look, Tom, you ought to be advocating a wealth tax." I took the same point you did, and threw it back at him, and he said, well, it's unconstitutional.

AC: *The point is, how to get at the structures of redistribution.*
ADK: *Have you ever read Gabriel Kolko's book,* Wealth and Power in America, *where he showed that not even the New Deal redistributed wealth?*
JB: I remember reading that the tax code didn't affect distribution.

AC: *Now, even if you do away with tax loopholes, the lobbyists aren't going to go away. Aren't you then saying, let's have a fight on the expenditure side?*
JB: Right. That's what I am saying. I haven't quite put it together, but you could do a lot of equalizing, building social equity through expenditures.

ADK: *Just to expand on this, what do you think are the long-term structural flaws of the economy?*
JB: The structural problem is, we've got poor people. We've got too many people without adequate income security. That's why I invoke the Catholic social doctrine that every worker is entitled to a living family wage.

ADK: *Do you think inequality is also an important structural flaw? Not just poverty but inequality?*
JB: Between the top and the bottom? That's one argument for the success of the Japanese. They have a smaller income gap: 25 to 1, and we're 150 to 1 or something. There seems to be dislocation here. When I was up in Laconia [New Hampshire], something very poignant hit me when a woman stood up and said, "I'm making $5.50 an hour as a teacher's aide. There's a lot of people in this town who are out of work; they'd love to be nurse's aides and teacher's aides for $5.50 an hour." And then there are lawyers at Cravath, Swaine & Moore making $600 an hour; you could hire a hundred people for that. So the vision I had was of a world of inverted values and jobs at the top of the pyramid, whereas most of the people are like the guys out at the Willow Run plant, facing the ravages of competition and its downward pressure on wages. The guys at the top don't experience it. There's a class here that is immunizing itself from the changes that it's requiring of the rest of the economy.

ADK: *The flat tax would not address that issue.*
JB: No, but I think if we had labor law reform; if we could incorporate the idea of worker participation, such as they have in Mondragón [a network of cooperatives at the leading edge of Spain's industrial economy]; if we expanded employee stock option plans, and not as tax games; if we could get more capital in the hands of working people; if we could strengthen the trade union movement; somehow if we could mobilize public pension funds. We ought to pay attention to Europe, where wage structures are somewhat protected. If you get addicted to low wages, you never bite the bullet of investment and modernization in a way that will allow you to have a high wage/productivity strategy.

But getting back to the tax for a minute, I like that list of things that you mentioned earlier. I'm not sure I could do all

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of them, but I think some of them are intriguing. Don't you agree, though, that if the tax code were made really efficient that would have a stimulus on growth?

AC: *I think you overstate it. One thing you're saying is very clear: "We've collected the money and here it is in the pot; now we're going to give it out and here is how." So you take the pressure off the tax side and you throw it onto the expenditure side, the priorities of government.*
JB: Right, and I've said that we're going to get rid of the Pentagon budget of waste: $300 billion. And I've estimated that it will take ten to fifteen years to do it, and millions of jobs to accomplish it, and we'll pay for it out of the savings that it'll generate every year.

AC: *I think the savings thing is mostly illusory. Take all those aerospace workers in California——*
ADK: *Or in Hartford—United Technologies, where they're laying off 6,400 people, with a multiplier effect of four or five times that——*
AC: *Now when you're not going to build the Seawolf or whatever, have you saved money there or have you just got thousands of people out of work? In other words, what are you going to produce that will substitute for what actually has kept the economy going for the past fifty years?*
JB: So you're saying you need the functional equivalent of the Pentagon in some form.

AC: *You do. You have to build an alternative. Now, you say bullet trains, and I think you can make a case for bullet trains. But you have to make a larger case.*
JB: Sure, that's just one piece. That's why I thought energy technologies—both the efficiency side and the renewable technology side. Right now, Bush is saying he won't agree with the European Community on CO_2 limits. If we're going to do better than that, then we have to have an expenditure program about how to get there, and that's a big program.

ADK: *So you begin to have an industrial policy here.*
JB: I like to say that we have certain goals. And I'd like to add another piece, which is that if the Chinese are going to double or triple their coal burning, then before they start doing this it's up to the developed countries to come up with a source of energy that's cheaper and cleaner. They can adopt it, and we can do technology transfers. We're not doing this now and so everything the developed world does toward clean air is obviated by what the Third World is doing to forge ahead.

ADK: *There are two kinds of industrial policy that I can think of right now. One is bureaucratic, which is what Tsongas was talking about and which is basically authoritarian, and the other is a populist policy in which the decision making doesn't lie with Washington bureaucrats or Cambridge bureaucrats but is democratized. Since you're running as a person who wants to extend democracy in all these areas, have you thought about how to democratize the decision-making process?*
JB: That's a good question. Nader's got his "toolbox for democracy," but I don't think that does——

ADK: *That doesn't really talk very much about this. We're talking about the biggest concentration of corporate power in the history of the world.*
JB: Right, that's what we're up against.

ADK: *And if you want to democratize the society, it seems to me that you have to extend democracy to deal with this enormous corporate sphere.*
JB: Yeah. Well, do you have any thoughts on that? I've started thinking about a public pension plan; I had some idea that as President you could mobilize all these public pension funds——

ADK: *Jackson had the same idea.*
JB: It's still fairly undeveloped at this point.

AC: *Let's talk about foreign affairs. The other night Koppel asked you about Iraq, and you said you'd be in favor of "going in there" with an air strike, if the U.N. approved.*
JB: I talked with Alan Cranston about this and he said, "Look, you gotta do something about that nuclear capability, but we shouldn't do it by ourselves."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY J-C SUARÈS

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AC: *But Governor, you know as well as we do that what the Security Council says is what the U.S. says.*
JB: You don't think there are any countervailing forces?

AC: *None whatsoever.*
JB: I think that's putting it rather strongly.

ADK: *Well, do you think Desert Storm was agreed upon in some democratic way? Or do you think that America bought out and bullied the rest of the Security Council?*
JB: It's something I don't feel I know, or have the information about.

ADK: *But it's important in the sense that a lot of people repair to the U.N. as a kind of way out of interventionism. When they can't think of what to say about American intervention, they say, "Well, let's let the U.N. do it." But the U.N. is not a democratic body. It is less a democratic body than the U.S. Senate, which you say is bought.*
JB: Well, I am aware of the weaknesses of international diplomacy. I was against the U.N. resolution on the use of force in the Persian Gulf. In fact, I debated Charlton Heston on the *Donahue* show.

AC: *But now admittedly we are talking in the white-hot context of New York.*
JB: Yeah, we are.

AC: *And look at the political forces. Four years ago, under the pressure of the New York primary, Jesse Jackson said he would not shake hands with Yasir Arafat for political reasons, and here you are favoring the $10 billion in loan guarantees to Israel in a fairly abandoned way. Those are the pressures of the political situation in which you find yourself at this particular minute. But those pressures never vanish. There you are President of the United States, and it's not just a matter of Palestinians; it's a matter of the entire trade structure of the United States, where Philip Morris comes to you and says, "We want to export American tobacco to Thailand, and if they won't accept our tobacco you've got to impose Section 301," which means that we won't buy their joss sticks, or whatever they're sending in our direction. Those pressures never go away, do they?*
JB: No they don't. But internationally, I've said that my goals in foreign policy would be Number 1, to end world hunger; Number 2, to curb arms sales; 3, to advance human rights, even to the extent of setting up a habeas corpus [procedure] available to the World Court; and 4, to exercise global environmental leadership.

ADK: *Do you have any ideas about how to democratize the world economy so that the United States and the G-7 countries don't control virtually the entire world?*
JB: Well, to have development programs that are more particularly fashioned by the integrity of the culture, the communities, the circumstances within Africa and Latin America and those countries where we're functioning, and not just let the market be the closet dictator. There's no doubt, for instance, that the I.M.F. and these international institutions have been responsible for a lot of environmental degradation.

ADK: *What caused you to turn from support of hemispheric free trade to a much more cautious plan?*
JB: I don't think I ever did turn. I said we need a common market; I never specified what the conditions were. This idea of fast track—as Nader has pointed out, there have been numerous treaties where the President hasn't had authority to in effect pre-empt the normal constitutional prerogatives of Congress. When I address the sheet metal workers, the laborers, and hear their concerns, I see real clearly that they need some kind of protection for their jobs. I committed myself to that.

I remember getting in an argument about the fast track in Washington with [journalists] Michael Kinsley and E.J. Dionne, Michael Barone, Chris Matthews and Eleanor Clift. I said the fast track is not going to fly. Kinsley looked at me like I was childish and said, "Come on, Brown."

AC: *Your popular mobilization on a single-payer national health plan would mean taking on the 1,500 insurance companies. And as you said, that is no mean struggle.*
JB: Just to deliver a health care system would be to do more than anyone's done over the last fifty years.

AC: *That raises the question of continuity of political mobilization. It's one thing to talk about a people's campaign, of which the goal is the national convention. But do you have a sense, if you're rallying this constituency and getting people riled up and getting the hundred-dollar contributions, that in the unlikely event that you do not prevail and become President and inaugurate your programs——*
JB: My commitment is to work real change. Without some institutionalized continuing effort, I don't see much change happening. The whole story of my moving from party chair to candidate for President has been the acknowledgment that the party structure as an institution is not capable of moving the country in a direction that the rhetorical goals would suggest. And that's why there's so much frustration out there, and there's so much loss of young people in terms of identification with the Democratic Party.

ADK: *You've said that you always work within the system and the system is important to you, and you want to reform within the system, but would you ever consider this year going outside the two-party system?*
JB: At almost every speech people ask, "Now, wait a minute, why don't you run as an independent?" And I always say I'm fighting for the soul of the Democratic Party.

AC: *Many people don't think it has a soul.*
ADK: *When someone says "the soul of the Democratic Party," you know that the next line is "the heritage of Truman, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey"——*
JB: Maybe we're reconstituting the soul of the Democratic Party. I wish to remain in the party, and this movement is within the Democratic Party.

AC: *Do you envisage a time when it would not be within the party?*
JB: I don't envision that.

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ADK: *Why?*
JB: Well, maybe I'm too much of a Democrat, and I'm being successful in building this movement within the party.

AC: *Let's hypothesize that you get to the convention, you haven't got quite enough delegate votes, you get your face trodden on. Do you say, "This is a real fight for the soul"? Or do you say, "Mephistopheles won, I'm off, goodbye"?*
JB: I'm not sure I understand that.

AC: *Jackson went to the convention in Atlanta in 1988, made a great speech, told his supporters the next day there was continuity, there was going to be struggle, and that was the end of it. It all went away.*
JB: I believe it's going to take a continuous movement building throughout the country to offset the forces that block change.

AC: *O.K., so there's Clinton running around the country——*
JB: I just don't believe Clinton's going to get the nomination.

AC: *Do you think Bush is beatable?*
JB: Yes he is.

AC: *And who do you think could beat him? You, obviously.*
JB: I have real doubts that Clinton can beat him. Maybe Clinton will fool me in the next few weeks and demonstrate a skill yet, but it seems to me that his campaign has been kept aloft by the early money—the first primary. That money has kept him going. He could always push forward with commercials, with spin, with consultants and make it go.

I think Bush is beatable if new people can be brought into the process. And the Democratic Party is having a difficult time reforming itself and restoring its vitality. This party has more of the elements of a Potemkin village than it does of an institutional presence. If we can capture the environmentalists, a sizable portion of the trade union movement, a growing, enthusiastic student movement, then what's left in the party other than incumbents? The party is a cadre of a few people, but the membership is supposed to be 5 million, and that membership is available through a candidacy, although not through the party structure. The party structure is the insiders and then the incumbents, and the grass-roots insiders and the incumbents' insiders. That's why I quit the party chair and decided that the party leadership had to be won through a presidential campaign, and the party turned into a party of real opposition to the reigning Reagan/Bush program. The party has evolved into a situation where a relatively small number of what I call thousand-dollar donors can invent a candidacy—in this case it's Clinton; I believe four years before it was Dukakis—that doesn't have a grounding in the basic constituent elements of the party. I have the environmentalists and some of the Citizen Action people, and then we have Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition—that's a pretty powerful force.

ADK: *Tsongas and Clinton have been criticized for having all-white campaigns. Clinton's campaign is all white men basically, except for his wife. Do you think that your campaign ought to reflect the diversity of the country?*

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JB: Yes, and we don't have a lot of employees, but this fellow—Sam, Sam Riddle was there tonight. Do you know him?

ADK: *But are there black people, Latinos and others who reflect diversity, as you said, traveling with you all the time?*
JB: Well, Sam was in the Michigan contingent, and we want to get Dennis [Rivera] over here, and Cesar [Chavez] traveled with me. And Jesse Jackson.

ADK: *The major piece that's lacking from your campaign now is blacks, and up until Michigan you had basically a minuscule black vote. Even after campaigning with Jackson in Connecticut, you lost the black vote there to Clinton. Why?*
JB: I just feel I haven't been able to communicate my message out there. I'm not as familiar. Clinton has a familiarity; he's been at it now; he's spending money. I don't know. That's a good question. I'm not fully sure I can give you an answer to that.

AC: *Are you just waiting for Clinton to blow up from a scandal?*
JB: I think his vulnerabilities are a definite part of a scenario that would envision my getting the nomination.

AC: *Do you think he's fatally damaged by what's already been said?*
JB: I've said he's not electable and I'm trying not to be too negative. I find it hard to conceive of him both getting the nomination and surviving the onslaught of George Bush, with the kind of low turnouts he's getting. The weakness of the Clinton candidacy is evident to anyone who looks at all the stories that have been coming out, but it's also masked in that people have not focused on the lack of enthusiasm or outreach to the kinds of elements in the electorate that are needed if we're going to overcome the enormous strength of the incumbent, with all the fiscal and monetary tools at his command. I think the party hierarchy is sitting on a keg of dynamite in this sense: that if Clinton were to get the nomination and if it turns out, as a lot of thoughtful observers would say, that Clinton is fatally flawed and Bush pulverizes him, then the people who made this possible and who sat around saying "Don't spoil Clinton's chances" become obviously the spoilers of the party's chances, and it will certainly discredit the leadership in a very fundamental way. □

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LETTER FROM EUROPE

Hate in a Warm Climate

DANIEL SINGER

He came, he threatened, but he didn't conquer. The French Riviera will not be the first important region in Europe to be ruled by neofascists. The growing shadow of Jean-Marie Le Pen prompted people throughout France to go to the polls on March 22. Half of them were expected to stay home, but at the last minute some 69 percent cast their ballots, thus reducing the share of the xenophobic National Front. Since Le Pen had boasted in advance that he represented a wave submerging the country, France sighed with exaggerated relief.

Actually, the disease is getting more serious. Garnering 14 percent of the vote, the Front managed to do as well in a regional election as its charismatic leader had done in a more favorable presidential poll. One person out of seven throughout the country, and one out of four in large sections of southern France, was willing to vote for a party that admired apartheid, praised Pinochet and intends to kick Arabs across the Mediterranean.

The last-minute democratic surge was no boost for the establishment. Indeed, consensus politics, barely introduced into France, is already threatened with extinction. François Mitterrand, who did the introducing by destroying the left as a radical alternative, discovered that his countrymen are not fond of the politics of tweedledum and tweedledee. The Socialists, who promised to "change life" and then nicely fitted into the prevailing pattern, are now paying the price. For a ruling party to win less than one-fifth of the vote, as the Socialists did, is plainly disastrous. Yet their principal rival—and partner in the establishment—the conservative coalition headed by Jacques Chirac and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, did not take advantage of this fall. Receiving barely one-third of the vote, it too suffered a setback. The only winners were the outsiders: the National Front and the environmentalists, who, in their two incarnations, the Green Party and the Ecological Generation, also took 14 percent of the vote. One has the feeling that, in a society shaken by crisis, citizens are groping toward new forms of political expression. The March elections conveyed a double message: The spectacular climb of the ecologists is a potentially optimistic portent for the future; the continued rise of the National Front is a sinister reminder of a ghastly past.

But is this not reading too much into a local election? The results in France were confusing because of the combination of two polls and the complexity of local government. France is divided into ninety-six departments, including Corsica. These are split into cantons, but in 1982 they were also merged into twenty-two regions. On March 22 half of France chose

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s Europe correspondent.*

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councilors for the departmental assemblies from the cantons, each of which is represented by a single member. At the same time, voters elected members of the regional assemblies by a system of proportional representation. It was this nationwide poll that offered scope for political interpretation.

Let me focus on the region that was most in the limelight, the so-called PACA, which stands for Provence, Alpes, Côte d'Azur. It is a region containing six departments, the three biggest centered around the cities of Marseilles, Nice and Toulon. Each department is entitled to a number of councilors based on its population, and each party puts up a full slate, which has a local head and which proclaims whom it would support for president of the regional assembly. The PACA was in the limelight because in addition to the incumbent, the conservative Jean-Claude Gaudin, it had as candidates for the presidency of the region two stars of the media, the tycoon Bernard Tapie, running as a Socialist, and Le Pen himself. To find out how real the Le Pen danger is, I followed the Leader down south to Nice.

Godfather's Succession

With the mountains to its back and the superb Bay of Angels before it, Nice is a unique city. The British upper classes appreciated it in the eighteenth century. The *promenade des Anglais*, which recalls their memory, stretches for more than three miles along the bay. It is now lined with big blocks of flats for tourists or well-off pensioners. The monotony is broken from time to time by an odd construction like the baroque Hotel Negresco with its pink dome. As you drive westward along the coast toward Antibes and Cannes, you have the impression that the town never ends. Yachts, golf courses, gambling casinos—it's filthy rich and terribly commercialized.

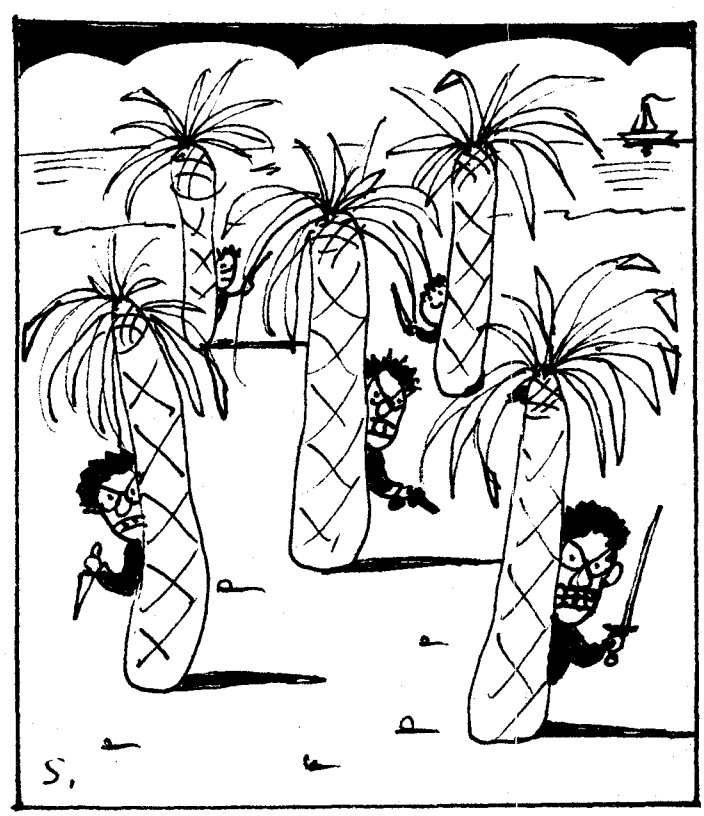
If Nice itself is relatively prosperous, why did Le Pen choose it as the best place to run? The presence of immigrants cannot be the real explanation, since foreigners made up only 8.7 percent of the population in the 1990 census, not much above the national average. Indeed, xenophobia in this area seems rather strange. As you walk around the old town with its ocher houses, you have the illusion of being in Italy. That is not surprising, since the city once belonged to the House of Savoy and became French only in 1860. Generations of Italian immigrants came to find work in the ensuing years. Nationalists often have short memories.

There are other reasons, however, for the success of the National Front in Nice. Unemployment, at 12.4 percent of the labor force, is above the national level. The *pieds noirs*, the French repatriated from North Africa, who have no love for Arabs, are particularly numerous; the climate suited them and they were politically welcome. Finally, this is the paradise of French old-age pensioners, who, like pensioners elsewhere, are very receptive to the right wing's propaganda about law and order.

Yet there is a deeper reason for Le Pen's choice, which has to do with heritage and a system of rule. Nice is the only big city in France that was governed for more than sixty years by the same family. Jean Médecin was its mayor from 1928 to 1965 except for a brief spell after the war when he was ineligible because as a deputy he had voted Marshal Pétain, the Nazi collaborator, into office. He presided over a system normally associated with southern Italy, with fixed bribes for offices to be gained or for services rendered, and a network of district committees, which could be described as social clubs—or as organized corruption. But the machine worked, and he bequeathed it intact to his son Jacques, who ruled for another quarter-century.

During that time, Nice, the fifth-largest city in France, with a population close to half a million, became a different place. The entire area changed: A scientific city was set up at Sophia-Antipolis and high-tech firms like I.B.M. moved in. Petrodollars flowed in from the Middle East and Mafia money, for laundering, from Italy. Control over the gambling became important, and the battle for the casinos was Chicago-like. When a widow owning an important gambling place refused takeover bids, her daughter was somehow forced to sell her shares and then mysteriously vanished. The bidder in that case was J.D. Fratoni, a bosom friend of the mayor.

Médecin had actually brought in a new team, graduates of Nice University and former members of the fascist student caucus. But he grew careless. Remarried to an American, he often traveled to California, where he was introduced as "Count de Medicis." He was also caught by the U.S. customs services trying to smuggle jewelry. At home, his use of public money for private purposes became too blatant. In September 1990, when the noose tightened and he faced a trial, the professional anticommunist "chose freedom" in Uruguay. Between Médecin, who twinned Nice with Cape Town, and Le Pen there was very little political difference. It was only a question of each one wanting his turf. With the godfather out of the way, Le Pen could begin his bid for the succession.



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The Challenger at Work

The Greenery Theater is a tentlike structure in the heart of Nice. Its 2,000 seats are filled. The loudspeakers blare out Wagner. Images on a giant video screen proclaim, "The National Front—It's You," "Oppose Exclusion of Frenchmen," "For the Death Penalty." The candidates are introduced, and the woman sitting next to me explains that *pieds noirs* are numerous, both on the National Front slate and in the hall. Now the music rises—the "Hymn of the Slaves" from Verdi's *Nabucco*—and the people chant, "Le Pen! Le Pen!" It's time for the star.

He looks like a retired prizefighter. His face is bloated and his stylish suit does not conceal that he is overweight. Yet he is still quite a performer, a ham actor who will revel in the limelight for the next two and a half hours. Before this audience, he can get away with anything. He does not have to present a policy or a program. He can claim that the German Greens were founded by the Stasi and were linked with terrorists. He can describe Socialist politicians as "a band of thieves, gangsters and racketeers," after proudly proclaiming that his candidacy has the blessing of Jacques Médecin, presumably a symbol of moral rectitude. He is here to thrill and to amuse. He impresses his audience with Latin quotations. He makes them laugh with music-hall jokes: "When you're in muck up to your ears, you must be careful to keep your mouth shut."

'Not all of them are bastards,' says comedian Guy Bedos. 'Some of them are bloody fools.'

Le Pen has been told that to win votes he must keep his tongue in check, so he's on his best behavior. He makes no openly racist or anti-Semitic remarks. Yet, listening carefully, you can still judge the man. His reference to Jean-Claude Gaudin as "the bearded woman"—a not so gentle hint about the incumbent's alleged homosexuality—gives an idea of his moral tone. The contempt he puts into the words "of every race and religion," describing demonstrators he saw in London, is also revealing. So is his scorn for those who stir up unpleasant memories of World War II: "They only want to talk about Pétain and Touvier" (a wartime torturer, hidden for years by the clergy and only recently arrested). "Whatever the subject, it reminds them of Hitler and Vichy."

Toward the end, he becomes more dramatic. He reminds his listeners of the four plagues: immigration, insecurity, unemployment and economic degradation. He speaks in apocalyptic terms about the nomads storming the sedentary people, reciting, in a rather strange sequence, "the Huns, the Magyars, the Turks and the Persians." In Algeria, he intones, the choice was between the suitcase and the coffin—fleeing or dying. Now there is no suitcase. But we must survive for the survival of France.

Outside, the militants are pleased but complain that their hero had to pull his punches. Should one be reassured by his more "moderate" tone? Recalling the expressions of hatred on the faces of the audience when Le Pen referred to "the privileges for foreigners to the detriment of the French," the two middle-aged women hysterically chanting "Le Pen! Le Pen!", the tough-looking guards whom nobody would want to meet in a dark alley, I cannot pretend I really feel reassured.

The Doctor and the Supersalesman

The disease in Nice got so serious that they had to call the cancer specialist, said a wit. He was referring to Professor Léon Schwartzenberg, a famous authority on cancer, who volunteered to lead the Socialist slate against Le Pen. Gray-haired, small and thin, the professor looks frail. He is speaking in a modern hall in the expensive and luxurious Acropolis building, erected recently under Jacques Médecin. This is the last big meeting for his slate. It's attended by government ministers running in neighboring departments and by the head of the regional Socialist slate, Bernard Tapie. The professor speaks movingly about how the French people were promised a change of life by the Socialists. At first there were advances, such as the abolition of the death penalty and five weeks of holiday with pay. But now is a time of gloom and fear. Unemployment and insecurity are linked and unemployment is spreading in capitalist countries. The time of revolutionary certitudes is over, and some of those certitudes were foolish to begin with, for instance, the belief in unlimited economic growth. We must communicate with our planet as a gardener does with the plants. Dr. Schwartzenberg does not hesitate to quote Marx or to include early Communists among his political ancestors. He closes with a famous quotation of Saint-Just: "Happiness is a new idea in Europe."

All this was fine, yet what connection did it have with the technocratic pronouncements the ministers made, or the colorful personality of Tapie? Tapie deserves a separate piece. Here let me just say that he is a self-made man. Born of a modest family in the "red belt" of Paris, he is, at 49, a millionaire. He makes money buying companies in trouble, improving their balance sheets—notably through a cut in the labor force—and then selling them at a profit. He is more a salesman than an industrial tycoon, and he has a great flair for publicity. His ownership of the best soccer club in France, Marseilles, is also an instrument for self-advertising.

Having had a brief career as a pop singer in his youth, he is very much the showman, exuding charm and wit. He is quite funny on this occasion, giving a French version of the anti-David Duke propaganda heard in New Orleans. Tell your well-off friends about the conventions that will not be held in Nice, he says, and the investments that will go elsewhere if Le Pen is elected. Since they love themselves more than their neighbors, tell them at least to be kind to their bank accounts. But it is with managers, not the workers, that he intends to discuss his economic program. Clearly, the "associated producers" are not part of his, or the ministers' for that matter, version of "socialism."

When I interviewed Dr. Schwartzenberg a few days later at his modest headquarters, he showed no illusions. He had waited three months for a Socialist leader to take on Le Pen and volunteered only when nobody came forward. He has not

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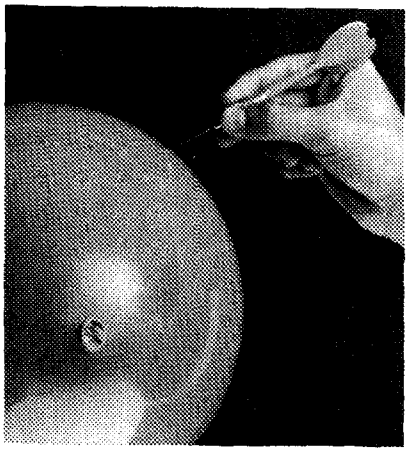

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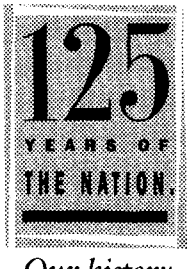

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been helped much by party headquarters in Paris, and the local Socialist Party is almost nonexistent. The only anti-Le Pen initiatives have come from intellectuals, who sponsored a petition, an exhibition of cartoons and a demonstration. Led by a band, several thousand people marched, carrying signs with slogans like "We are all children of immigrants, first, second or third generation," or, borrowing from Tacitus, "Willing slaves make tyrants." But that was at best a beginning. When the Socialist Party chooses a Tapie as leader in Marseilles, which used to be its stronghold, it is clear how far it has sunk. As for the Communists, under Georges Marchais they have achieved their own self-destruction.

Bay of Scoundrels

It takes a couple of hours to go from Nice to Marseilles by train; I went there for the sake of comparison. In Marseilles the reasons for the rise of the Front seem more obvious. The casbah, the poor man's ghetto, still lies in the very heart of the city. Unemployment has risen sharply, and the National Front has moved its headquarters to a more impressive building. Its campaign this time was headed by Bruno Megret, a small, thin-lipped product of France's top engineering school and a former public servant who is now Le Pen's second-*in*-command.

On reflection, each area has its peculiar reasons. Nice has a right-wing tradition, while Marseilles used to be dominated by the left. The south, with its many reactionary repatriates, has merely proved a pioneer. Now the Front captures about a fifth of the vote in Alsace and in the industrial belt surrounding Paris. For Le Pen's movement the immigration issue is merely a pretext. Discontent is mainly inspired by unemployment, insecurity, fear of the future, the absence of hope. And, one is tempted to add, by the bankruptcy of the left.

During the campaign, Tapie caused an uproar with his statement that if Le Pen is a dirty bastard, then people who vote for him knowing what he stands for are also dirty bastards. The leftish comedian Guy Bedos, addressing a pro-Schwartzenberg rally, provoked his audience by saying, "No, they are not all bastards," and then won it over by adding, "Some of them are bloody fools."

But the matter is much more complicated because the very same people can be good or bad, angels or scoundrels, depending on circumstances. As long as a Le Pen is followed by certified thugs and fascists of old vintage, the danger is small. It is only when apparently ordinary people, driven by discontent, fear and lack of perspective, are ready to follow dangerous prophets that the situation threatens to get out of hand, as it now has.

Even if he failed to reach his goals, Le Pen did much better than some people realize. In Nice, the Front came first with just over 30 percent of the poll. In the department of Alpes-Maritimes, it came in second with 27 percent of the vote, and in the regional assembly it won thirty-four out of 123 seats, a good base for launching new offensives. Unless a resurrected left rapidly opens new horizons, Le Pen may prove more successful next time, and the beautiful Baie des Anges may yet become the bay of scoundrels. □

EARTH SUMMIT IN RIO

Will It Do More Harm Than Good?

HERMANN SCHEER

In June 1992 the world will focus on the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro—the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Gathered at one of the most famous tropical spots in the world are all the elements that have the competence, status and political responsibility to change environmental policy: national governments, U.N. organizations, nongovernmental organizations, scientists and hordes of journalists. Never before has an international conference undergone such extensive preparation. Countless meetings, thousands of scientific treatises and action plans, national preparatory committees and working groups of international organizations are all paving the way for UNCED '92.

No previous international conference has had to endure such high expectations. One reason for this is that in the past few years the contradiction between theory and practice has continued to grow. We now know a great deal about environmental and development dangers: the safety problems and wastefulness of nuclear energy, the depletion of the ozone layer, the shortage and filth of fossil fuels, the destruction of tropical rain forests, the population explosion, soil erosion and water pollution. But despite such awareness, these perils continue to escalate. We are still on the wrong track. Humanity faces an unprecedented tragedy, but no serious attempt has yet been made to avoid it. Thus we take comfort in the imminent Earth Summit and invest excessive hopes in it.

Governments have also added to the pressure placed on Rio, and their reasons for doing so are sometimes quite dubious. For years conferences on environmental policy have served as substitutes for action. A noteworthy example of this was the May 1990 U.N. conference "Action for Our Common Future" in Norway. The impetus for this conference was a report, "Our Common Future," published in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development. Yet the gears of the international consensus-seeking machine insured that the proposals were weakened beyond recognition and in the end completely ineffective. We would have been no worse off had the conference never taken place.

Conferences, reports and studies represent alleged evidence of concern, action and involvement. Caravans of ministers and experts trot around the globe and call for new thinking, although new action is what is needed. The extent to which conferences and reports have become mere public relations maneuvers and substitutes for action can be seen in the fact that their only noticeable consequences are follow-up conferences and reports.

Hermann Scheer is a member of the German Parliament and president of Eurosolar.

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Thus it is not surprising that the upcoming Earth Summit has also been used as an alibi. More and more governments have begun to delay the environmental policy initiatives demanded of them. Instead of immediately carrying through national initiatives, governments point to the unknown results of the Rio conference. Since the World Climate Conference in Toronto in 1988, which urgently called for immediate reductions in carbon dioxide emissions, the governments of industrialized nations have repeatedly declared that because of international economic competition, such measures would require an international framework, that is, identical obligations for every country. Since 1990 the Commission of the European Communities has been attempting to introduce a carbon dioxide tax in all twelve member states so as to create just such an international framework. But most governments have merely responded with the words "Let's wait for Rio." They have postponed all constructive decisions even though it has become apparent that UNCED will not pass a resolution that obligates all industrialized states.

The Earth Summit is expected by some to be a fundamental turning point in international politics, an end to an era of ecospheric destruction and the beginning of an era of harmonious development between humans and nature. But it probably won't be—not because there is no hope of saving our planet but because UNCED's scope of action is too limited for such a colossal ambition. The Polish author Stanislaw Lec once said, "He who wants to raise his standards must lower his demands." The demands on the conference in Rio have been set too high—in some cases deliberately, so as to avoid altering the status quo, and in other cases out of naïve enthusiasm. One has only to look at the several hundred nongovernmental environmental organizations that have spent much of their funds on attending the preparatory conferences so they can be among the expected 35,000 conference members. Only a fraction of them will have the honor of giving five-minute speeches. They have behaved like people who believe that political decisions are rational and not influenced by divergent interests—that governments merely need to hear their arguments and action will follow. One easily forgets that a United Nations conference doesn't have decision-making power.

The conference in Rio is a paradox. It has stirred international motivation finally to make environmental policy a priority. The preparations alone have encouraged unprecedented international communication, which has helped open the world's eyes to the necessity of prompt action. It is no longer possible to ignore or play down the dangers of the greenhouse effect. In preparation for the conference, new strategies have been developed, providing a basis of international know-how that political decision makers can now build upon. The positive impact thus lies in the area of developing new foundations for political action, for example strategies for the preservation of forests, carbon dioxide reductions and a halt on ozone killers.

But the scope of action in the international community is limited because it must succumb to the principle of consensus. For global energy, development and environmental policy, consensus means that concrete decisions do not exceed what the slowest nation allows. Thus what is left of those decisions is substantially watered down and isn't even compulsory. A classic example is the U.N. convention that obligates the nations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to contribute 0.7 percent of their gross national product to development aid. This convention has been in effect since the 1960s, but only four governments have fulfilled this obligation. There is no way to force the other O.E.C.D. countries to do so. From this we can tell what sort of practical value conventions on tropical rain forests or climate protection, which are some of the Earth Summit's goals, will most likely have. At best they will be nonmandatory, ineffective guidelines. The international political system is not capable of more—not now and not in the near future.

Crash programs and breakthrough strategies are necessary to deter an ecological catastrophe. Yet demands for an "energy consensus" are becoming more frequent. Advocates argue that energy supply problems cannot be solved without one. This is nonsense. Never in history has consensus provided any pathbreaking progress. New proposals that lead to new structures undeniably collide with established ways of thinking, structures and interests, that is, with prevailing structural conservatism, which doesn't budge very easily. But a change in the conventional energy system is so urgent that the necessary steps resemble a race against time. Those who are responsible for the established energy supply structures and their disastrous effects are not the best advisers regarding these steps, and they are certainly not the appropriate partners.

The race against time thus requires the willingness of every government to play a leading role and to break away from the ritual of consensus seeking, even if this means risking conflict. The "risk" of neglecting pathbreaking, avant-garde strategies is far larger than the risk presented by such strategies.

Thus we should not overestimate the possibilities of the Earth Summit. There is already talk of a follow-up conference.

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This is not a very good sign. Passing new conventions will do no harm—if they are not mistaken for a standard that need not be overstepped. But they are not a substitute for independent national and regional initiatives. These *must* exceed the goals set by international consensus, and many could replace military programs. A mere adjustment in our thinking is required to reshuffle our jumbled priorities. The United States' S.D.I. program (Star Wars), given an ecological twist, could become the Solar Development Initiatives program. And the same could be done with the new military or space programs of other industrialized states. Our problems are on Earth, not in space, and the threat facing human survival is far more real than the threats coined by conventional security thinkers.

International environmental and development policy requires motivating politicians to new action. International institutions must be given new structures and authority to meet new global challenges. Some institutions must be dissolved; new ones, such as an International Solar Energy Agency, an Environmental Security Council and Green Helmet Forces, must be formed. New goals and financial resources to support them are the issues at hand. We need an era of bold and prompt action. When conferences neglect or postpone such action, they do more damage than good. □

A CITIZEN'S COMPLAINT

On Being Busted By the L.A.P.D.

KIM BENDHEIM

When, in his State of the Union Message, President Bush said that we should support our local police and be tough on crime, I had my doubts. What kind of crime is he talking about and how tough is tough? Has anyone told him about the Los Angeles Police Department? Does he know that, contrary to the way our legal system is meant to operate, the L.A.P.D. assumes you're guilty of whatever crime or misdemeanor you're charged with and then treats you as such? Based on my personal experience, I am happy to report that the L.A.P.D. is more democratic than it is given credit for: Whether or not you are a black male felon, they treat you like scum. The difference, of course, is one of degree. As the police-misconduct referral lawyer whom I called to report the following incident said, "Imagine if you'd been black. It would've been worse."

This is what happened: On the way to a dinner party, finding myself late and lost, I made an illegal U-turn on Santa Monica Boulevard. Suddenly, a patrol car came zooming up behind me. The officer wrote up my ticket and checked my record. He said I was going to be a lot more than late for dinner. There was a warrant out for my arrest. He was going to have to take me down to the station. Why, I wanted to know. The answer was, for a speeding ticket!

To backtrack, a couple of months ago, after moving to Los Angeles from New York City, I'd gotten a speeding ticket and paid $28 to go to (I kid you not!) "The World Famous Improv Traffic School," a class taught by would-be comedians. I duly mailed in the certificate of completion to the D.M.V. They didn't get it. I was never notified of that, or that a warrant had been issued for my arrest. I told the officer I could go home to get a receipt to prove my innocence. He said he couldn't let me do that and radioed for help. "But I paid the ticket," I said.

"You've got two choices," he said. "I can move your car to a legal parking spot or you can leave it here and have it impounded."

"Are you joking?"

"No, I'm not."

By this time his reinforcement had arrived, presumably to help handle me, which, had I been in a better mood, would have struck me as funny. The other cop was about 24, tall and very fit. He looked like a Marine. That cop explained to me that the older officer was serious. I had a convertible. In L.A., many people choose to have their convertibles impounded rather than risk leaving them on the streets like sitting ducks for car thieves.

"Park it," I said, thinking I'd rather a thief make off with my car than pay the city that had spawned the L.A.P.D.

I gave the officer my keys and he drove off with my car. The young cop took away my bag and portfolio. "You're going to have to put these on," he said, as he produced a pair of handcuffs.

"No, please," I said. "No one can ride in the back of my patrol car without wearing handcuffs," he said. "It's the law." I started to cry. I didn't understand why he needed to handcuff me. I weigh in at 115 pounds and I'm a woman, and he was a man with a gun. It made no sense. How could I hurt him? "No need to get so upset, ma'am."

"Easy for you to say. Have you ever been handcuffed in the back of a police car?" I asked.

"Yes, I've been to jail," he said. "I'd rather not say what for."

That silenced me. I felt like Alice in Wonderland mistakenly falling into a novel by Kafka. I was being taken to jail by a cop who'd been in jail himself. Was I safe with this policeman, I wondered. I'd heard a lot of stories about the L.A.P.D., none of them good. Rodney King had begged, too.

On the way to jail, the cop told me that my bail, with no previous offenses, would be $288. I asked if we could stop at a cash machine so that I could bail myself out. Then my friends wouldn't have to come down to the station. "No, I can't do that," he said.

At the jail, a sour-faced black woman jailer told me to put my hands up against the wall. She felt up and down my torso, the length of my bare legs, under my arms, the sides of my breasts. "You're lucky you weren't strip-searched," she said. I wanted to throw up.

A burly (around 270 pounds), pink-faced, close-cropped cop went through the contents of my bag again (the woman

Kim Bendheim, a former reporter, is an actress and a writer. She will appear in David Lynch's movie Twin Peaks *under the name Kimberly Ann Cole.*

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jailer had already gone through them), itemized them and told me to take off my jewelry.

Fraser, the young cop who'd brought me in, opened up my actor's picture portfolio, a thin black case. His eye lingered lasciviously on pictures of me dancing in a red dress from a David Lynch film I'd recently completed. I felt violated. What right had this man, who'd been in jail himself, to go through my personal things? Why was I being treated like a dangerous criminal? I didn't understand it. Trusting the U.S. Post Office to deliver my mail should not have landed me in jail.

I was led to a holding cell. The steel-barred door closed behind me. I was locked up for the first time in my life and I was scared. The cops obviously didn't give a damn if I was innocent or guilty.

The guy sitting next to me said he'd spent the weekend in jail for a jaywalking ticket.

The pink-faced cop now acting as my jailer came and let me out and said that I was allowed three phone calls: Which numbers from my address book did I want? I asked for the telephone number of the friends at whose home I was expected for dinner. From behind his little bulletproof cubicle the big, brave police officer called them. As directed, I picked up the phone in the lobby.

I explained my situation to my friend Anna. I told her that I needed $288 bail, or she could come get my Citibank card and use it to get money to bail me out. After I hung up the phone, I was led back to my cell and locked in again. The cop hadn't told me that I'd be taken back to the cell after one phone call. Had I known I was going to be put back in a cell, I would've made the other calls.

"Anna?" I said half an hour later, thinking I'd heard her voice around the corner (she was only a ten-minute drive away and should have arrived by then, I thought).

"What?" said the woman jailer, who'd come back to relieve the cop.

"I thought I heard my friends."

"No one's here. You're hearing things," said the woman, with a nasty tone in her voice.

"What's your name?" I asked, hoping to befriend her.

"Hall."

"What's your first name?"

"You don't need to know that."

"That's not fair. You know my first name. How about telling me yours?"

"Life's not fair," she said.

No one needs to tell me that, I thought. Look where I am. Up in smoke went any idea I had of trying to disarm her so she'd let me make another phone call. I thought of telling her that just because life was unfair didn't mean you had to make it worse for people, but there was no point, I decided. She left, and the same beefy, pumped-up cop came back to replace her. An hour later my friends still hadn't come. I wondered where they were. I asked the jailer if I could make the other two phone calls.

"You talk too much."

"I'll stop talking if you let me make another phone call," I said.

"I doubt it," said the policeman. He said he was busy and would do it later, when he had time. He didn't.

Eventually, my friends bailed me out. At the front of the police station, where I'd been escorted by the woman jailer, I saw Anna. We hugged each other. I was lucky, I thought, that she had the cash. We left. In the car I realized that the cops hadn't returned my picture portfolio. My friend Ben accompanied me back to the station. I didn't want to go alone. While we waited, I saw a cash machine in the lobby and withdrew some money to pay Anna back.

Ben asked the cop at the front of the station if prisoners were allowed to bail themselves out. "Well, it's up to the individual officer's discretion," said the cop. "But once I put handcuffs on someone, I don't take them off. I mean, she doesn't look dangerous," he said, pointing at me, "but she could be."

"How amazing," said Ben after we stepped outside so he could smoke. "Presumably the cash machine's there for a reason." He told me that when he and Anna had come in, she'd asked the police officers where the nearest cash machine was. They'd said they didn't know, yet there was one right in the lobby.

"They don't make it easy for you," he said.

"That's for sure," I agreed.

After making us wait half an hour, the woman jailer finally brought out my portfolio. We left and went to a bar. After a double shot of vodka, I finally began to feel better, especially when the guy sitting next to me said he'd gone to jail for a jaywalking ticket. He'd spent the weekend there. Visions of my tiny, birdlike grandmother, a confirmed New Yorker, coming to visit me in L.A. and being arrested for jaywalking danced through my head. Why doesn't the L.A.P.D. distinguish between people who have warrants out for their arrest for traffic violations and, say, murderers? Why can't people, if they have the means, bail themselves out?

In the wake of the Rodney King beating, a lot of attention has been paid to the way the L.A.P.D. treats minorities. Well, their attitude toward other citizens isn't much better. Daryl Gates, the man now proposing that he be allowed to help choose his successor, prides himself on the democracy of the L.A.P.D., and he's right, too. The tough-guy cops who will kick an unarmed man when he's down make little distinction. They treat everyone, black or white, male or female, felon or no, as if they were worthless and guilty. If they don't physically excoriate you, they do it verbally. I was treated with hostility by the cops who jailed me, and I'm white. So it isn't simply a question of race. It's also a question of attitude. Why do we permit the L.A.P.D. to behave the way it does? This is America, and in this country, so I was told, we have rights, among them, one would hope, the right not to be harassed, beaten or shot by our own police. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

A Footman at the Door

ANN SNITOW

WISE CHILDREN. *By Angela Carter. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 234 pp. $21.*

Angela Carter died of lung cancer on February 16, age 51. For her committed readers, the loss is unbelievable. How can someone who was just in the middle of saying something so fascinating, rare and deliciously funny, all at once be dead? Almost certainly—though we can't finally measure these things—her new book, *Wise Children*, was written before she knew she was sick. On first reading, I thought it a light farrago, a repeat of old turns under the circus top, familiar to her loyal fans.

But, though we've been with Carter to strings of occasions like this before—eccentric household dinners, carnivals, magic shows, birthday parties that careen out of control—that first reading was way off. After consideration, and still quite sure that Angela had no intention of writing herself an ending here, I've come to see *Wise Children* as a complex philosophical work on the ambiguity of biological ties, on the family romance, on the theater generally (Shakespeare in particular) and, above all, on pleasure.

To some degree, this second take is no surprise: Carter has always been a demanding writer, abstract in her own rollicking way, allusive, a profoundly literary novelist of ideas. The ideas here arise out of the ever-surprising medium of one Dora Chance's raffish, also serious, attempt at writing her memoirs. She hopes for a best seller, for isn't her book about the theater, including behind-the-scenes glimpses of three generations of the gifted, beautiful and famous, also fabulous clothes, five sets of theatrical twins, jokes that are funny and magical endings like Shakespeare's romances? Even better, Dora herself, and her twin, Nora, are "illegitimate in every way." Hers is a by-blow's story, written from the backstairs, the backstage, the dying music-hall tradition, the wrong side of the Thames, in Brixton. Like Shakespeare, gazing at everything from the Globe (which was also on the south side of the river, and appears at the end of the novel in the form of a big birthday cake), Dora sees the high and the low, takes on their different voices, mixes them in one script. And she does Shakespeare one better, making not a mosaic of difference like his but a more promiscuous melting together; her people don't sort themselves out at the end but remain scrambled in a wild democracy—to the Bard unthinkable.

Ann Snitow is a writer who teaches literature at the Eugene Lang College of the New School for Social Research.

Carter redefines 'family romance' to mean a fiction in which random people collude to be one another's permanent destiny.

Like the novel in toto, Dora is without shame, but—always the reflective twin—the *question* of her and Nora's illegitimacy haunts her. She is obsessed ("Whence came we?") and keeps trying to make sense of their origins: "Chance by name, Chance by nature. We were not planned." As far as they can gather, Dora and Nora are the unacknowledged daughters of the great Shakespearean actor Melchior Hazard (yes, dear reader, French for Chance). As the book opens, it is Dora and Nora's 75th birthday, and on this very day, which happens also to be Shakespeare's birthday, hence a day in spring, their famous father turns 100. Dora is sitting at her word processor, spinning out the family romance that has brought them all to this moment, the day of Melchior's big party, where everyone in the story will meet, change identity, reshuffle life's deck of cards and set forth again, accompanied by a song from the music halls ("Strange how potent cheap music is," Melchior told the twins one of the few times in their lives he deigned to see them):

> While teeing off a game of golf
> I may make a play for the caddy . . .
> . . . but my heart belongs to daddy.

But who is Daddy, that one's heart might belong to him? When Dora and Nora were kids, their Uncle Peregrine (or was he their father, or whose father was he?) took them to a music hall in Brighton where one Gorgeous George told the master joke, a ruling metaphor of the novel, the story of a young boy whose "thoughts turned lightly to" . . .

> So he says to his dad, "I want to get married to the girl next door, Dad."
> "Ho, hum," says his dad.
> "I've got news for you, son. When I was your age, I used to get me leg over . . . the garden wall . . . and, cut a long story short, you can't marry the girl next door, son, on account of she's your sister."
> The air turned blue. Mothers forced reluctant children outside, bribing with ice-cream . . .

But the pubescent Chance sisters, soon to be in vaudeville themselves, stayed on with their Uncle Perry.

> So this boy buys a bike and . . . pedals off to Hove. . . . He comes back, he says to his father: "I've met this nayce girl from Hove, Dad."
> "Hove?" says Dad. "Sorry to say, son, I frequently hove to in Hove when I was your age and—" . . . Say no more. . . .

This poor boy takes a train next, but up pops his father:

> "We had trains in my young day, son. . . ."
> The boy goes into the kitchen for a cup of tea. . . . "Looks like I'll never get married, Mum."
> "Why's that, son?"
> He told her all about it, she says: "You just go ahead and marry who you like, son—"
> Split-second timing. That pause. Perfect.
> "*E*'s not your father."

This kind of biology matters to everyone in the novel, but as in the joke, nobody seems able to get it right. They think they know who Daddy is, but they don't. More shocking, they get it wrong about Mommy, too. At first Dora thinks, "a mother is always a mother, since a mother is a biological fact, whilst a father is a movable feast." Many another feminist novelist would have left the matter right there, but not Carter. For her, the trouble is just beginning. Fathers are biology, too, in their way: "You can't fool a sperm." Then Uncle Perry suggests to Nora that she has no more idea of who their biological mother was than "whose emission sparked off our being." Was

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their mother, as they've been told, a Cinderella, their Grandma Chance's chambermaid? Or maybe Grandma Chance was herself the true? mother? In any case, Grandma "invented" them a family "out of whatever came to hand."

In a witty turn, Carter redefines "family romance" to mean a fiction in which a random set of people collude to love one another, to be one another's permanent destiny. "Family" becomes an idea, "love" an act of self-creation. (Carter allows herself a hilarious riff here on the troubles biological authenticity can cause one, considering how nice it would have been for Cordelia and Hamlet if someone could have danced on stage at the right moment with that punch line, "*E*'s not your father.") It's not that Carter throws biology *out*, exactly. But she keeps edging the concept of family toward the fictional—and hilarity.

At the end of the novel, Dora and Nora take on newborn twins, the next crop of Hazard bastards, and in their ecstasy at finally being parents they sing and dance in the street—

> We can't give you anything but love, babies,
> That's the only thing we've plenty of, babies

and "the Hazard theme song," now revealed as an anthem for the illegitimate—

> Is you is or is you ain't my baby?

As she cavorts and pushes the double baby carriage along, Nora glimpses her new, narrative power: "We can tell these little darlings here whatever we like about their mum and dad. . . ." Finally, biology is hearsay, a tale accepted on faith, based on the protestations of other people. (At the 1990 DIA Art Foundation forum on "critical fictions"—now a book edited by Philomena Mariani, from Bay Press—Carter lamented the new genetic tests that pretend to put an end to this complexity.) Family is a drama that unfolds. Freud holds up one side of the curtain—the family romance—and the Bard the other—the romance of the discovery scene.

It was always Carter's work to retell these master accounts, the great tales, worm away at their plots, twist around their sentiments. Her Little Red Riding Hood enjoys sleeping with the wolf; the mother of the bride shoots her new son-in-law, Bluebeard, between the eyes. (For these and other radiant stories, see *The Bloody Chamber*.) Dora Chance dreams of destroying "the terms of every contract" and of setting "the old books on fire." In *Lear*, the bastard is the villain. But in *Wise Children*, God stands up for bastards at last. For the late Shakespeare, an unspoiled identity lay in lawful paternity, sealed in the final embrace between true fathers and true daughters. For Carter, that line of true descent is forever branching, a family tree gone wild. In her version, the illegitimate get to inherit, too, and they are allowed Shakespeare's special gift in the comedies, happiness.

Melchior Hazard, that pompous ass, believed of his Bard that "the whole of human life was there." Carter disagreed, and laughed at a culture that hypes Shakespeare, uses knowledge of him as a class marker and commodifies him as a National Treasure. (In one great bit, a cat keeps pissing in a sacred urn of dirt from Stratford that is meant to be sprinkled as a benediction over a haywire Hollywood production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.)

Carter rewrites Shakespeare, parodies him, makes fun of his icons (the Chance sisters live on Bard Road), but she has no intention of giving up her romantic duet with plays she clearly knows in her very bones. The allusions come in cascades, with an incredibly agile range of effect. A bit of rosemary caught in Dora's teeth reminds her of Ophelia's rosemary for remembrance, opening the way to precious recollection. Elsewhere that same scene from *Hamlet* replays itself as farce, as the twins' goddaughter runs mad on television and exits calling, "Hey! Somebody call me a cab, right? A cab! Right away! . . . Goodnight, everybody! . . . Sleep tight. . . . Goodnight." Dora and Nora play bellhops in the Shakespearean musical *What You Will* (variously rendered in the text: *What? You Will?*, *What! You Will!*, etc.). They're not sure where to deliver a package, "2b or not 2b?" Perishable as this is, it is not so very far away from their film production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a magic that endures. Neither the clunky set smeared with fake fairy dust nor the grinding routine can detract from the dazzling final illusion. Singing and dancing away, the Chance sisters faithfully give the audience their "helping of dark."

The novel's mixture of satire and silliness with homage to Shakespeare's power to enchant is very lovely. Carter dares what Shakespeare dares, his stunning reversals of fortune: Dora says it's too late for children, but it isn't. She says Uncle Perry is full fathom five, but he isn't. She says sex is over for her but, in the finale, she sleeps with Perry, even though, just

"What is so wrong with considering sexual safety and freedom an individual right, independent of how others regard you?"

Ellen DuBois
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like her father, he's 100. "It ain't no sin"; rather, it's magic, the late plays. The novel begins with a spring tempest and ends with the finding of the lost and with lovers meeting. This Shakespeare may be fractured, but it's beautiful.

In an interview in 1988 (some of which was published in the *Voice Literary Supplement* of June 1989), Angela Carter told me how she wished she could escape this elaborate writing of hers, the "beautiful." She envied the Australian novelist Christina Stead, who began with beauty ("exquisite rococo stories") but then "learned how to write badly." We talked this question round and round and Angela regretted that, unlike her admired mentor, she couldn't stop piling up the luminous, conspicuously clever words. She concluded that the only thing she'd been able to do to undermine her own style, this painting-an-inch-thick, was to learn how to be funny.

In *Wise Children* we can see how far Angela got with this project of using comedy to carry her work beyond the aesthetic solipsism she feared in herself. At a PEN Women's Committee meeting in 1988, she told a rapt audience she was reading theatrical memoirs but was too superstitious to say more about her current project, except that it was something "serious." Always the ironist, but still she meant it: *Wise Children* is serious. Its comedy is structural; this laughter is the pleasure that was always part of Angela's point.

Ambivalence about pleasure always interested her. On her frequent visits here, she complained about American culture's smarmy quest for "permission," a word she detested, and she wrote very funny essays about Gay Talese and Linda Lovelace on this theme (all to be found with other treasures in her collection of essays, aptly titled *Nothing Sacred*). Her original study of the Marquis de Sade, *The Sadeian Woman* [see Snitow, "The Post-Lapsarian Eve," October 4, 1986], turned on the same idea: She was with Sade in his mad search for the limits, but was then disappointed when his limit turned out to be MOTHER.

Angela Carter sought a language for pleasure, a quest she took on very self-consciously as a feminist project. Pleasure was also to be for girls. Feminist critics call for this kind of writing, but the texts that actually deliver it are few. Carter's desires—ideological and literary, private and social—led her across current theoretical boundaries. Neither her polyglot word choices nor her deconstruction of myths precluded an indulgence, too, in old-fashioned closure—when she wanted that pleasure. She loved the old stories, partly because she could manipulate our nostalgia for them, but also because they delivered the goods—fantasy, distance, satisfaction, resolution. Pleasure with her was not always just a little further on, forever out of reach. She wanted it now; in contemporary parlance (which fascinated her, always the theorist), her writing celebrated the pre-Oedipal, certainly the polymorphous and the perverse.

Wise Children offers aesthetic pleasure like a gift to the reader—elegant plot patterns, coincidences, thematic doublings, verbal leitmotifs, multiple twinning, ha, ha. Like Shakespeare, Carter is a crowd pleaser. The richness and shifting rhythms of the prose here are awesome, with now and then the dazzling, show-stopping image: When Grandma dies going to get more beer at the off-license during the blitz, the twins come home to find her empty glass, "with the lacy remnants of the foam gone hard inside it." This was a fitting goodbye from their grand, if mysterious, parent, "an old lady who looked like St. Pancras Station, monumental, grimy, full of Gothic detail."

The footman is at the door with an invitation to a party, though on another day rather like this one, he will come with a black-edged message. Angela Carter knew, better than most, that sorrow and death are always in the wings. Dora's story skips over the war that killed Grandma because, alas, "it was no carnival." Let others speak of the immovable sorrows we all face. Carter brought deep feeling to her knowledge that joy is important, fragile, more easily lost than anything. Hence entertainers have strange but precious work. The novel ends on Dora's thought, "Oh, what a joy it is to dance and sing!" She is happy, but as she knows, a happy ending depends on knowing just when to stop.

I've indulged myself by using the present tense for much of this essay, but there's no hiding from it: This loved writer is slipping away. Her thoughts, always so sensitive to the moment, will begin now to be a record of the past. Not only was she a great novelist, but also one of the very few who had any new ideas at all about sex, about men and women's desires and about the pleasures of the text. Our amazement at her is the measure of our loss; nor is there any way to comfort ourselves by pretending she'd already had her say.

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Angela would have been great at old age, irritable about the loss of her senses (sans teeth, etc.) and bent on enjoying herself with whatever she had left. What should have happened, if the story went right, would have been for her to grow old like her funny, brilliant, stagy characters. At that final party, Nora Chance asks her ancient father to dance: "Give us the pleasure." □

The Family Thing

DAVID FUTRELLE

EMBATTLED PARADISE. The American Family in an Age of Uncertainty. *By Arlene Skolnick. Basic. 284 pp. $23.*

George Bush called in a recent speech for "a nation closer to the Waltons than the Simpsons." While the celebration of a fictional Depression-era family might strike some in recession-era America as more than a little odd, it shows that Bush has at least mastered the basics of family-bashing. For many years, discussions about the family—popular and academic—have been mired in a rhetoric of perpetual crisis. Critics from every ideological perspective lament the family's alleged decay—some on the right railing against permissiveness and perversion; some on the left decrying capitalism's encroachments on the last remaining haven in a heartless world. As Arlene Skolnick notes in her provocative new book, *Embattled Paradise*, such critics invariably evoke a misbegotten nostalgia for "a lost golden Past."

Skolnick's book, a wide-ranging and often polemical account of family history in the postwar years, is a useful antidote to the "bleak rhetoric of loss and decline" so easily invoked by Bush. Skolnick, a family scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, attempts to move the debate away from jeremiads and moralistic denunciations. In a climate of cultural dislocation, it has been easy enough for many critics to fasten on certain aspects of the changing family—increased divorce rates, single or working mothers, and so on—as symptoms of decay. But, as Skolnick argues, such moralizing is facile and misleading; changes in the family should be seen as "responses...to large-scale social [and demographic] change, rather than a fall from moral grace." The politics of nostalgia misrepresents family history, distracts attention from real social and economic problems and helps to promote a regressive agenda of social control.

Like so many observers, Skolnick makes much of the distinction between the idealized image of the 1950s and the "cultural earthquake" of the 1960s and 1970s, though she does so in order to confound the traditional analysis of this contrast. Americans were indeed, as Elaine Tyler May has noted, "homeward bound" during the early postwar years. They married younger than before, glorified the domesticated wife and mother and enveloped the family in layers of sentimental expectation. But, contrary to the popular image of the 1950s as the epitome of the traditional family, the intense domesticity of these years was in fact a radical (and temporary) departure from longstanding historical developments.

Our ancestors didn't live long enough to face such problems; there's no midlife crisis for the dead.

Even at the time, many of the contradictions were visible: In the midst of the postwar "orgy of domesticity" Americans bitterly complained about their alienated lives in the "split-level trap" of suburbia, and housewives suffered from a variety of unvoiced complaints that Betty Friedan would later label "the problem that has no name." Skolnick observes that "in an uncertain time like our own . . . it is difficult to capture the sense of suffocation many people experienced in a society that seemed all too certain and cohesive." The collapse of these certainties in the 1960s and 1970s, in Skolnick's account, was almost predetermined, a "return of the repressed." A convincing argument—but one is left wondering why the "aberrant" domesticity of the 1950s developed in the first place. Skolnick suggests that the family offered symbolic comfort from the lingering "psychosocial effects of Depression and war" (including the cold war); beyond this, however, her explanation is frustratingly vague.

But if she is not entirely able to explain the 1950s (who is?), Skolnick is able to put the current state of the family in its proper—that is, historical—perspective. Deftly synthesizing a wide variety of work on family history, Skolnick points out that the "traditional" nuclear family is a relatively recent (and inherently unstable) development, rather than the timeless embodiment of simple moral truths. The "breadwinner system," with its workadaddy father and housewife mother, seems increasingly a nineteenth-century artifact. It reached its peak in 1890, and women have been moving into the workplace in increasing numbers ever since.

Many of the commonly cited symptoms of family decay—from divorce to midlife crises—are in Skolnick's view the results of the increasing number of choices opened up to most Americans by industrialization and relative affluence. Declining mortality rates, for example, mean that "a couple marrying today [is] more likely to celebrate a fortieth wedding anniversary than were couples around the turn of the century." If contemporary couples have more problems sorting out questions of identity in their middle and later years than their great-grandparents did, it is in part because their ancestors simply didn't live long enough to face empty nest syndrome or the problems of old age (you can't have a midlife crisis if you're dead). In the end, Skolnick appeals for an eminently pragmatic approach to current questions of family life, calling generally for "new social arrangements that fit . . . the kinds of lives we now lead."

Skolnick's critique of the family critics is often insightful, but her too cheerful pragmatism often contradicts her own evidence. She falls easily into a bland rhetoric of progress that shunts aside questions of class and race, celebrating the cultural "democratization of American life" while downplaying the country's less-than-democratic inequalities. (I'm not sure why Skolnick allows herself to be so carried away by her own rhetoric, since she herself points out many times that American affluence doesn't extend to everyone.)

Skolnick's focus and central assumptions are resolutely middle class; the ex-

David Futrelle, a doctoral candidate in American history at Northwestern University, is writing a dissertation on the changing conceptions of youth culture in the postwar years.

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periences of everyone outside this group generally come across as simple approximations, more or less accurate, of the middle-class ideal. Except for one tangential detour, race doesn't really enter the picture at all, which is especially regrettable given that the purported pathologies of black families figure so heavily in what passes for debate on public policy these days. Homosexuality—the ultimate bogy of the traditionalists—gets only four scattered paragraphs.

Even more strangely, Skolnick's conclusion shows how thoroughly, if uneasily, she is enmeshed in the very moral discourse she so persuasively critiques. After her attack on nostalgia, she ends by calling for a "new center" in American life, implicitly endorsing a rapprochement "between the liberal values of the 1960s—self-fulfillment, equal opportunity for women—and the traditional work and family values of the 1980s."

I'm not sure such a rapprochement is even possible, much less desirable. The appeal to "traditional values" helps to keep notions about the family ensnared in the invidious moralism that glorifies existing inequalities (especially between men and women) and makes a true egalitarianism impossible. Indeed, many of the most creative, and most egalitarian, social experiments of the past few decades have fallen apart *because* of the persistence of traditional values, not because these values have trickled away. Communes—one of the most easily mocked aspects of the search for what Muriel Fox once called "new combinations for . . . intimacy and support"—were brought down as much by "traditional" sexism and sexual exploitation as they were by any other inherent contradictions. Even today, Americans are so ensnared by tradition that they cannot escape the sexist division of household labor that traps all too many working women in a "lesser life" of endless work and chores, the obvious hardships of which are then attributed, quite wrongly, to feminism.

Nowhere are the ambiguities of Skolnick's account more apparent than in what is perhaps the most provocative section of the book, her discussion of the "psychological gentrification" of the American people. Skolnick traces the development of a new introspection among Americans, which she sees in large part as growing out of the disintegration of fixed identities. The new focus on selfhood, she argues, has been misunderstood by social critics like Christopher Lasch, who "misdiagnosed [it] as narcissism," a bleak, self-defeating form of self-indulgence. Since the psychologization of America has been a necessary and natural response to the wide range of choices opened up by the collapse of taken-for-granted social constraints, we can no more reverse these trends than we can bring back the Victorian family. As Skolnick points out, "to blame moral decay or therapeutic culture for our ills . . . misleads us into believing that through a combination of individual acts of will, moral fortitude, and regressive social policies, we can restore an imaginary past."

This is fine as far as it goes, but the triumph of the therapeutic has proved to be more complex and ambiguous than Skolnick is prepared to admit. "Psychological gentrification," with its peppy overtones of progress, is no more an accurate label for the current situation than "narcissism." The new-model, New Age therapeutic rhetoric that so saturates political discourse today—to some extent driving out the family rhetoric so popular in the 1980s—has sanctified the most regressive aspects of the status quo as effectively as any fervid denunciations of moral decay ever did.

In the new politics of therapy, discussions of poverty turn to blame-the-victim lamentations of psychic failure. Gloria Steinem reduces the lessons of feminism to a New Age search for "self-esteem." The Gulf War was successfully repackaged as a form of national group therapy, as (in the words of Dick Cheney) "almost a healing process" for the psychic wounds of Vietnam. Even Clarence Thomas was able to invoke the "healing process" after his nomination fight. A reader's letter to the *Chicago Tribune* shortly afterward shows not only how deeply resonant his opportunistic plea proved to be but also how easily and completely the rhetoric of therapy and family can become conflated. "We have now all just participated in the largest group therapy session ever held for our extended family in the United States," the letter writer suggested. "If any good is to come out of this pain, some healing needs to take place. . . . The therapy session is over. It is now time for the mandated 'group hug.' Our family needs to live together in this big house we call our nation." It's a strange equation: Family + Nation + Therapy = Brave New World.

We can't simply repeal the psychological age, of course, but we need to be as resistant to the lure of "mandated group hugs" as we should be to what Skolnick

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calls the "lure of nostalgia." Perhaps her effective critique of the moralistic critics of "narcissism" will help to pave the way for a real assault on the New Age rhetoric of "healing." Despite my disagreements with Skolnick about the ultimate implications of the developments she chronicles, and her regrettable blindness on issues of class, race and sexuality, she has by and large raised the right sort of questions, and her book should help nudge the public debate away from debilitating crisis-mongering. If her analysis is sometimes undermined by contradiction and ambiguity, this is in part because there is nothing, after all, more inherently ambiguous than the complex and emotionally laden issue of the family. □

The Real Thing

LAWRENCE JOSEPH

FLOW CHART. *By John Ashbery. Knopf. 216 pp. $20.*

AN ATLAS OF THE DIFFICULT WORLD. *By Adrienne Rich. Norton. 60 pp. $17.95. Paper $7.95.*

In late 1936 Wallace Stevens delivered his first public lecture on poetry at Harvard. Shaken by the Depression, Stevens realized that "politics" had become "nearer to each of us" as a result of "the pressure of the contemporaneous." Yet, he contended, "in poetry . . . the subject is not the contemporaneous, because that is only the nominal subject, but the poetry of the contemporaneous."

Stevens's observation captured a fundamental shift in Modernist thinking. In the 1930s, as "politics" in its largest sense increasingly collided with human consciousness, the question for the Modernist poet became, quite simply, what poetry should do about it. Responding to revolutions of political economy—as well as to the collective awareness and imagination of it—Stevens predicted, accurately, that poetry was bound to probe its intricate relationship with the world around it.

Although at first glance no one would deny that John Ashbery's and Adrienne Rich's poetry appears distinctive, each poet's work at its core remakes the aesthetic foreseen by Stevens. These two poets have explored compulsively, more than their peers, the persistent pressure that late-twentieth-century American life imposes upon a poet's fundamental need to create. Their most recent books, *Flow Chart* and *An Atlas of the Difficult World*, prove the point. In them, Ashbery and Rich project their respective poetries of living reality deeper and more magnanimously than ever.

John Ashbery's poetry has always been, if anything, contemporary. For Ashbery, the concept is defined by a Modernist tradition that goes back not only to Stevens but to Gertrude Stein, who believed that a writer's language should capture as much of a sense of the present as possible. That's what Ashbery tries to do: Everything, including what it means to write poetry, is fair imaginative game. But that isn't all. Ashbery also possesses a highly sophisticated, idiosyncratic feeling for the avant-garde. Combining configurations of present existence with indications of how meaning is discovered and formed, he imagines contemporaneity in its fullest sense. Every Ashbery book approaches the contemporary world—and what poetry is within it—differently. Yet every book aspires toward, and achieves, some idea of what we experience and know. For Ashbery, language contains multiple meanings; his poetry reflects—you might even say bears witness to—this. Subjects replace subjects; the "I" stays in a state of referential and definitional flux. Various feelings are expressed continuously through different types of voices arranged within beautifully formed yet syntactically and colloquially diverse sentences. You may disagree with how, in a given poem, Ashbery chooses to figure it all out—an autotelic imagination has a propensity for excess. But Ashbery knows his limits: Part of what the poetry does is stay ahead of what you might be thinking about it. By investigating the unfathomable connections between aesthetic and political domains, he creates an ever-new poetic space.

Flow Chart, more than any of his other books, portrays the essence of Ashbery's process. The title indicates the book-length poem's central preoccupation: Like a flow chart, it may be read according to what the reader desires. If the title's metaphorical signal is somehow missed, the poet reminds you, at the end of the first of the poem's six parts, what he's up to: "But if it interests you/you can browse through this catalog and, who knows, perhaps come up with a solution that will apply/to your complicated case, just conceivably, or perhaps you know someone better informed/in the higher echelons where the view is distant and severe,/the ground blue as steel." The passage is one of many that reveal the book's recurring awareness of its own pursuits. *Flow Chart* is a catalogue, which Ashbery presents as endlessly expansive and open to interpretation, encompassing within its subject matter—well, as much as the poet may imagine.

Yet although you can't quite locate what *Flow Chart* is "about," certain subjects are insistently noticed: the nature of the city ("Still in the published city but not yet/overtaken by a new form of despair, I ask/the diagram: is it the foretaste of pain/it might easily be?" the poem begins); memory; death (of a mother in particular); religion; art, politics and work; and a revelatory preoccupation with love and love talk. The poem sounds like a diary of how we talk about ourselves and our world:

> There isn't much you can do, and it's
> a little darker. Tell it the time. And
> on no account lose your bearings
> unless you want to wash up like a
> piece of polyester at the gulf's
> festering edge. That tanker took on
> more water. The consensus was that
> there *would be* a
> symposium, if anyone could be found
> to host it. Meanwhile things are getting a little better
> on that front too, which includes
> romance . . .

You're supposed to take the poet at his word: Read the poem where and how you want, look or listen for language that catches your ear, eye or sensibility. Reading it is like listening to an intriguing conversation, or returning to a piece of music whose powers you're convinced of, to listen to parts of it, or the whole in relation to the parts—like focusing, for example, on the interstices between abstraction and figuration in a Modernist painting.

Written for the most part in long (flowing), conversational, almost meditative lines (a form of personal tonal talk that Ashbery's been refining for years), the poem is composed into sections that are, more accurately, verse paragraphs. The language has a formal feel to it that diffuses the vocal intimacies just enough—you never quite know how at-

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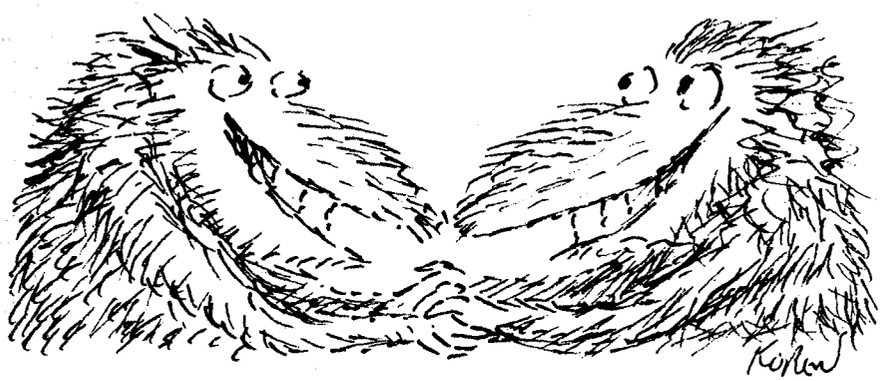

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tached to the speaker or listener the person speaking is:

> I don't know where this one came in—
> but wait,
> it is of myself I speak, and I do know!
> But the looks I got convinced me I
> was someone
> else as I walked in, not at all sure of myself or (rightly, as it turned out) of
> the reception I would be getting. . . .

Because of the feel of the language and all it maintains, reading *Flow Chart* provides a definite pleasure—wherever you choose it. You come away when you've had enough satisfaction, go back when you want more:

> Any day now you must start to dwell in
> it,
> the poetry, and for this, grave preparations must be made, the walks of
> sand
> raked, the rubble wall picked clean of
> dead vine stems, but what
> if poetry were something else entirely,
> not this purple weather
> with the eye of a god attached, that sees
> inward and outward? . . .

"Voices of autumn in full, heavy summer;/algae spangling a pool. A lot remains to be done, doesn't it?/I haven't even begun to turn myself inside-out yet," the poem says near its end, after turning its radically comprehensive perceptions outside-in.

Adrienne Rich's contemporaneity is more overt. Acutely aware of moral and social effects, blessed with an extremely fine critical intelligence, Rich since the early 1960s has continually asserted her decision to write poetry that runs counter to the poetic language of a certain Romantic tradition that is self-centered and noncritical—an outmoded poetic language she sees mirrored in a patriarchal and imperial United States. From her earliest work, Rich has been aware of poetry as a form of thought (for example, the title poem of her second book, "The Diamond Cutters," is about the act of creating a work of art). In the 1960s, Rich's poetry became aware of its critical powers: Poetry becomes the means through which forms of inhuman power can be exposed. Needless to say, Rich's aesthetic is tied into her political sensibility. She defines herself as a socialist and a feminist, and these identities provide her with a strong, doctrinal language. Yet Rich remains unique in the ways in which she applies her political insights to the practice of Modernist poetry. "Socially aware" poets sometimes settle for a po-

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etry of worked-over diction and a sloppiness of sentiment indistinguishable from the second-rate nineteenth-century versifiers. But Rich's work never reflects a primary concern with herself, nor is it ever sentimental. Although she pulls from her own experience, she's not interested in writing autobiography; though her language sometimes loses its edge and lapses into what appears to be dogma, its critical impulse persists. Rich looks at herself and her subject matter hard, pushing out the complexities of human behavior through an "I" who is essentially functional, although at the same time personal and social. For Rich, the poet inside a wrecked society must will an imagined common language to get to human love, which is for her the central subject of any personal or social order. A poetry of ideological commitment must enter the heart and mind, become as real as one's body, as vital as life itself—that's what makes it poetry. In Stevens's terms, Rich's subject is above all the poetry of contemporary political economy and morality. Her emphasis on the autonomy of art engenders an irony akin to Bertolt Brecht's. Her poetry's passionate turning back into language itself—within a society that overwhelms it with its terrors—gives Rich's work undeniable power.

An Atlas of the Difficult World possesses this power throughout. The book's title picks up a recurrent motif in Rich's work ("The words are maps," she wrote in her famous 1972 poem "Diving Into the Wreck"): the creation of a cartography as a metaphor for poetic language. The mapping-out is, in the first instance, an aesthetic statement. Then, Rich projects—as she always does—her territory. Whereas her last two books, *Your Native Land, Your Life* and *Time's Power: Poems 1985-1988*, took on, respectively, the relationship between poetry and the body, and poetry and time, *An Atlas* chooses as its focal point "the *difficult* world"—as opposed to other "worlds" the poet may have chosen.

The breadth of the undertaking allows Rich to be especially expansive. The book has two parts. Part one is the title poem, comprising thirteen sections. To paraphrase what Rich has said of Elizabeth Bishop's poetry, the poem critically and consciously explores marginality, power, and powerlessness, with great beauty and sensuousness and characteristic clarity as well. "I am struck to earth," the poet says, as she reveals worlds of hatred, suffering and violence that try our senses of light and darkness, beauty and love. The writing is graceful and gorgeous:

> Within two miles of the Pacific rounding
> this long bay, sheening the light for miles
> inland, floating its fog through redwood rifts and over
> strawberry and artichoke fields, its bottomless mind
> returning always to the same rocks, the same cliffs, with
> ever-changing words, always the same language
> —this is where I live now.

It is also generous—in the spirit of Walt Whitman and one of his most important legatees, Muriel Rukeyser. Through to the final section, the poem embodies its fundamental issue—"What homage will be paid to beauty/that insists on speaking truth, knows the two are not always the same,/beauty that won't deny, is itself an eye, will not rest under contemplation?"

The difficult relationship between beauty and truth in a world that necessitates resistance continues into the book's second part. Children and adults oppressed by war, poverty, deprivation, racism and moral failures are formed by language that skillfully moves emotional tones. One of the book's most heartrending poems, "Tattered Kaddish," is spoken on behalf of "all suicides":

> Praise to life though ones we knew and loved
> loved it badly, too well, and not enough
>
> Praise to life though it tightened like a knot
> on the hearts of ones we thought we knew loved us

Each poem presents "the great question" asked by the "philosopher of oppression, theorist/of the victories of force," Simone Weil, "*What are you going through?*"—purposely speaking "from the marrow of our bones." The last poem, "Final Notations," a kind of epilogue, could also be the book's prologue. The poem's two pronouns, "it" and "you," overlap, explode and include the multitude of ideas, thoughts and realities that people the book. But you have to read both pronouns, first of all, as representing the act of poetry itself, that which most forcefully opens up for us the depths of the difficult world: "it will not be simple, it will not be long"; "It will take all your flesh, it will not be simple"; "you are taking parts of us into places never planned/you are going far away with pieces of our lives"; "it will be short, it will take all your breath/it will not be simple, it will become your will."

That's what makes *An Atlas of the Difficult World* and *Flow Chart*—so different in their particular strategies—so very important: Each book brilliantly renews the critical act of creating poetry out of the tremendous reality of our lives. Taking in and giving back an intensified feeling for the world we live in, conceiving language inside its most pressured verbal form, these books express as deeply as possible our overwhelming, difficult, common time. □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Crazy for You
Marvin's Room
The Substance of Fire
Four Baboons Adoring the Sun

Crazy for You, at the Shubert Theatre, is a musical comedy in the form of a musical comedy. The entire production is in quotation marks—the musical component quite literally so, being a pastiche of Gershwin songs, mostly from *Girl Crazy* of 1930, but also in the sense that each situation, even each *joke*, in Ken Ludwig's marvelously canny book has a feeling of being at once brand-new and *déjà vu*. Ludwig can write wisecracks for any occasion that have the zing of daisies picked fresh in 1930 and sent, overnight express, to the here and now with every petal still dewy. As for the score, it includes such perdurable Gershwin standards as "I Got Rhythm," "Embraceable You," "But Not for Me" and "Nice Work if You Can Get It," leavened and interleaved with less familiar fare: "Shall We Dance?," "Slap That Bass," "What Causes That" and "Naughty Baby."

The production is modestly sumptuous, with a chorus line of ten chorines (racially integrated, let it be noted) that is deployed with such taste and imagination that all but the most doctrinaire can enjoy the show without crying "Sexism!" The sets are varied and pretty without being on the one hand overwhelming (like the blimpy hits of the eighties) or on the other hand underwhelming (like *Grand Hotel*'s).

And the stars shine. Perhaps not with legendary luminescence (Ethel Merman did "I Got Rhythm" for her Broadway debut in *Girl Crazy*; Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney co-starred in the 1943 movie version), but then again, perhaps

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with. The star of the show, Harry Groener, is a vocalist/dancer after the diffidently suave manner of Fred Astaire but with the advantage (or possibly the handicap) of matinee-idol good looks. He can tap his way to happiness along with the chorus line, or sweep his leading lady, Jodi Benson, off her feet, or do a show-stopping novelty number (a dance in which he and Bruce Adler mirror each other's every move and *moue*), all with equal panache. If Benson dazzles somewhat less, it may well be that the book offers her fewer and less rich opportunities. Her first solo, "Someone to Watch Over Me," is symptomatic—a nice song that she delivers nicely enough, but it doesn't spring from the situation or her character.

But that is virtually my only cavil, and I haven't yet got to the real source of the show's delight: its choreography by Susan Stroman. Words fail. Indeed, it is the particular glory of musical comedy that words do fail and feet (etc.) do their stuff. In the last decade there has been a dearth of dancing on Broadway, with some of the biggest hits virtually dance-free. Even when a show has a good choreographer in charge, there has been a drift toward ballet (Tommy Tune's lovely bolero in *Grand Hotel*), paralleling a similar drift toward opera in the treatment of vocal material. This has accommodated the wish of dancers and choreographers to be accorded the respect due Serious Artists, but it tends to diminish the Dionysian side of musical comedy, which is its raison d'être. Surely most of us go to a musical with the expectation of good fun, high spirits and even intoxication. I remember waltzing home from some of the movie musicals of my childhood, and if I didn't waltz home from *Crazy for You*, it wasn't for want of inspiration. If *I* were a rich man, I think I would keep going back to *Crazy for You* every night of the week until I'd memorized the whole show. Lord, what fun.

Do go, while life yet remains.

In a universe ordered for the needs of theater critics, *Marvin's Room* would have made its transfer from Playwrights Horizons to the Minetta Lane Theatre some three weeks ago and I would have been able to review it in tandem with Circle Rep's *The Baltimore Waltz*, which it so much resembles and so much excels. The theme of both comedies is AIDS, and the playwright of each has adopted a similar strategy of indirection, offering female protagonists who are dying of another but equally fatal disease. In *The Baltimore Waltz* that disease is imaginary and even somewhat whimsical. In *Marvin's Room*, the heroine, Bessie (played by Laura Esterman), is diagnosed as having leukemia in Act I, and in Act II her last hope—that one of her relatives will be able to act as a possible bone-marrow donor—fades and then vanishes.

Traditionally (and by now AIDS plays have acquired their own traditions), the grimness of the disease has been offset by the care and later the grief of the victims' lovers (*As Is*, the movie *Longtime Companion* and *The Baltimore Waltz*). Bessie has no such solace, for she is the caregiver in the family, having spent most of her adult life nursing an offstage vegetable of a father and a scatterbrained, semi-invalid aunt, Ruth (Alice Drummond). Bessie's meanspirited sister, Lee (Lisa Emery), has escaped to other parts to start her own dysfunctional family, which includes a sullen teenage arsonist, Hank (Mark Rosenthal), whom we first encounter in the mental hospital, where Lee has come to visit him, and his kid brother, Charlie (Karl Maschek), who lives in an alternate universe of paperback books.

You would think these would be the ingredients of the blackest of black comedies, but instead playwright Scott McPherson has coaxed his material into something much more on the order of *I Remember Mama* or *Lost in Yonkers*, a feel-good family drama in which the comedy mediates between heart-stopping pathos and teary-eyed uplift. I loved it, and my response seems to be typical. All the cast parenthetically cited above deliver memorable performances, but Laura Esterman as the saintly, suffering Bessie creates one of those definitive performances, like Zero Mostel's Leopold Bloom or Jessica Tandy's Blanche DuBois, that theater legend is made of. David Petrarca directed, a job that required unusual discretion, since it could so easily have been botched. The set design, by Linda Buchanan, consisted of a solid wall of translucent glass bricks through which we can sometimes see the blurry figure of the bedridden Marvin. To me this seemed a conspicuous waste of money, unjustified by the two or three times it is exploited to picturesque effect. After a while one simply learns to ignore the set. That is a small failure. The play itself is a large success in a genre all its own, slapstick pathos.

Like *Marvin's Room*, Jon Robin Baitz's *The Substance of Fire* was first presented in New York by Playwrights Horizons after being test-driven at regional theaters (in this case, at Long Wharf and Naked Angels) before transferring to its final commercial destination—the Newhouse Theater at Lincoln Center—with a sheaf of quotable raves ready to hand. Only a Kennedy running for Congress would seem better insured

UNION SQUARE MARKET

It's a fair, an outdoor bazaar,
my shopping bags quickly fill:
organic fruit, seven-grain bread,
distressed looking vegetables,
so real after glossy supermarket
displays from distant California,
a heavy load to plop down before
yet another stall, appraising
the buys while a black woman
ahead of me counts out pennies,
her body thick with layerings
against the cold—brindled scraps,
feet shod in Adidas discards
from which her bunions poke,
sacks of scavengings under her,
treasure gleaned from the streets,
her hoard of coppers perhaps
picked from the pavement—you've
seen them scattered but are
too privileged to bother; and
what about those jars next to
cash registers, for unwanted
nuisance pennies, our society
way beyond this chickenfeed.

She harvests those pennies,
stacks them here like tubular
skyscrapers on Third Avenue,
making a little city in model
before its translation into food.
"Take your time"—the farmwife
decidedly tender toward her.
You two are supplicants before
earth's valid representative,
approach the laden table of
the Lord in equal standing,
encountering this neighbor
not through a confrontational
"Put money in the cup!" or alms-
sympathy of the kind evoked by
the pietà outside Carnegie Hall,
with a sign, "Dying of AIDS,"
a defensive numbness in place
so that you can move at all,
here she is on your footing,
indifferent to your presence.
You can do nothing for her
as she exercises her ordinary
right to exist. Both of you eat
to live: you cannot turn away.

Curtis Harnack

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against failure. Baitz's play is more traditional in its appeal than McPherson's, an upscale product like the pricey tailored suits favored by its protagonist, Isaac Geldhart, a Holocaust refugee who now heads a distinguished New York publishing company, Kreeger/Geldhart. Act I presents a confrontation between Geldhart and his three children, Sarah, Martin and Aaron. At issue is whether the company will publish a trashy novel by Martin's friend and sometime lover, but the ante keeps getting upped until, like a latter-day Lear, Geldhart loses control of the company to his children. Act II finds Isaac licking his wounds and further losing his grip in a wonderfully realized musty apartment on Gramercy Park (the sets are by John Lee Beatty), where he is forced to undergo an examination of his mental competency by a social worker who. . . . But to say more would spoil some of the playwright's best surprises.

That large part of the Manhattan theater audience that is itself engaged in publishing will find many pleasures of recognition in Act I, including tiers of bookshelves stocked with copies of high-minded books that have been the unpalatable fruit of Isaac's editorial judgment. As Martin, the profit-minded son, Patrick Breen is the very spirit of the eighties, a baby shark who preens himself on his vulnerability and need for love. Jon Tenney as the most Cordelia-like of the three younger Geldharts commands more sympathy but less interest, and Sarah Jessica Parker has the unenviable role of being the person in the family everyone ignores.

But it is Ron Rifkin as Isaac, together with Maria Tucci as the visiting social worker in Act II, who makes the show one of this season's most desirable tickets on or off Broadway.

Meanwhile, upstairs in the larger Vivian Beaumont (which makes it a "Broadway" play and eligible for Tonys), John Guare's *Four Baboons Adoring the Sun* has opened while the memory is yet fresh of his long-running *Six Degrees of Separation* in the same theater and starring the same actress, Stockard Channing. I can't honestly say I hated it, for that would imply a more intense involvement with the events being simulated on stage than was ever the case. I was bored, with twinges of annoyance and ever-diminishing flickerings of hope when I would think, "Well, now he's got that part of the exposition over, maybe things will get interesting."

To give credit where credit is due, there is a soundtrack, created by Paul Arditti, that consists of premonitory rumblings that never failed to make me believe *something* was about to happen, and the lighting, by Richard Pilbrow, was equally thrilling. I'd happily attend a *son et lumière* production designed by Arditti and Pilbrow, and I might be almost as enthusiastic for the set design, by Tony Walton, were it not for his having to create four heroic statues representing the baboons of the title, first appearing as Ozymandian ruins and then, for a *coup de théâtre* at the end of the intermissionless play, restored miraculously to their original condition. The four baboons were on view long enough for them to seem unhappily apt symbols of the play itself in its failed aspirations to that higher beauty and secret wisdom that the Ancients possessed.

Perhaps every ambitious playwright must someday come to terms with, or have a stab at, Greek tragedy. Some attempt a frontal assault, writing their own Greek tragedies based on canonical myths, a method that has yielded such diverse results as Sartre's *The Flies*, Charles Ludlam's *Medea* and Lee Breuer's *The Gospel at Colonus*. Others update the Greek originals after the fashion of O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* or A.R. Gurney's *Another Antigone*. Those who adopt the latter strategy generally employ the conventions of naturalistic drama, though they will often try to find some way to approximate the jurylike presence of the Greek chorus, as did O'Neill and later T.S. Eliot, in his own ever-so-latter-day recensions of classic Greek drama. It is Eliot's high-minded, high-table example that Guare follows—to his destruction. For Guare is no poet, none at all. Like most nonpoets, Guare thinks it is enough to be spare of speech, to repeat key phrases in an incantatory way and to speak of what is elemental—the Sun, the Sea, Love, Death—and one has achieved poetry.

A still more fatal mistake: Guare has the god Eros on stage through most of the play, commenting on the action in the kind of operatic recitative that any composer can write in his sleep and audiences leave the theater parodying. Stephen Edwards wrote the notes, and baritone Eugene Perry sang them as well as anyone could.

And then there are the children, nine of them, all alike as models in an L.L. Bean catalogue, cute and bright and sassy and quite unable to give Guare's portentous dialogue the inflections of living speech. The two oldest children, played by Wil Horneff and Angela Goethals, have the

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as in childhood games that began
with one person It, The Bear,
the rest of us children in the woods

until we were touched, one
by one, and *went over*—
the awful loneliness of being

the last child left, torn
between wanting to win
and wanting to be with the animals

who were at home in the dark,
whose eyes shone, who no longer answered
to the only names you knew them by.

Sharon Bryan

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worst of it, for the entire burden of the plot, such as it is, falls on their slender shoulders. They must fall in love at the playwright's say-so, and when they find their underage love forbidden by their parents (themselves an adulterous couple), they climb up a large revolving symbolic disc center-stage, from which height the boy, who has adopted the name of Icarus. . . . But that would be telling!

As the adulterous couple who have brought their nine children to Sicily in order to re-enact Greek mythology, Stockard Channing and James Naughton don't generate enough erotic energy to achieve a corporate merger. At one point, having a picnic onstage, Channing upends her stemmed wine glass and the red wine at the bottom of the glass remains just where it was. It's that kind of wine, and that kind of play.

What is probably the most notable thing about *Four Baboons* is that Frank Rich of *The New York Times* considers it a work of genius. If the play achieves any kind of success, Rich's name should be added to the credits in the program just above those of the producers, who were Andre Bishop and Bernard Gersten. Peter Hall, who must know better, directed. □

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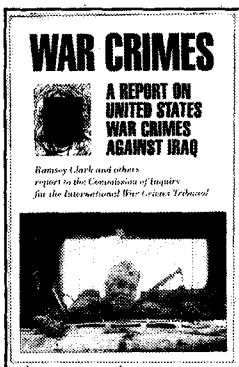

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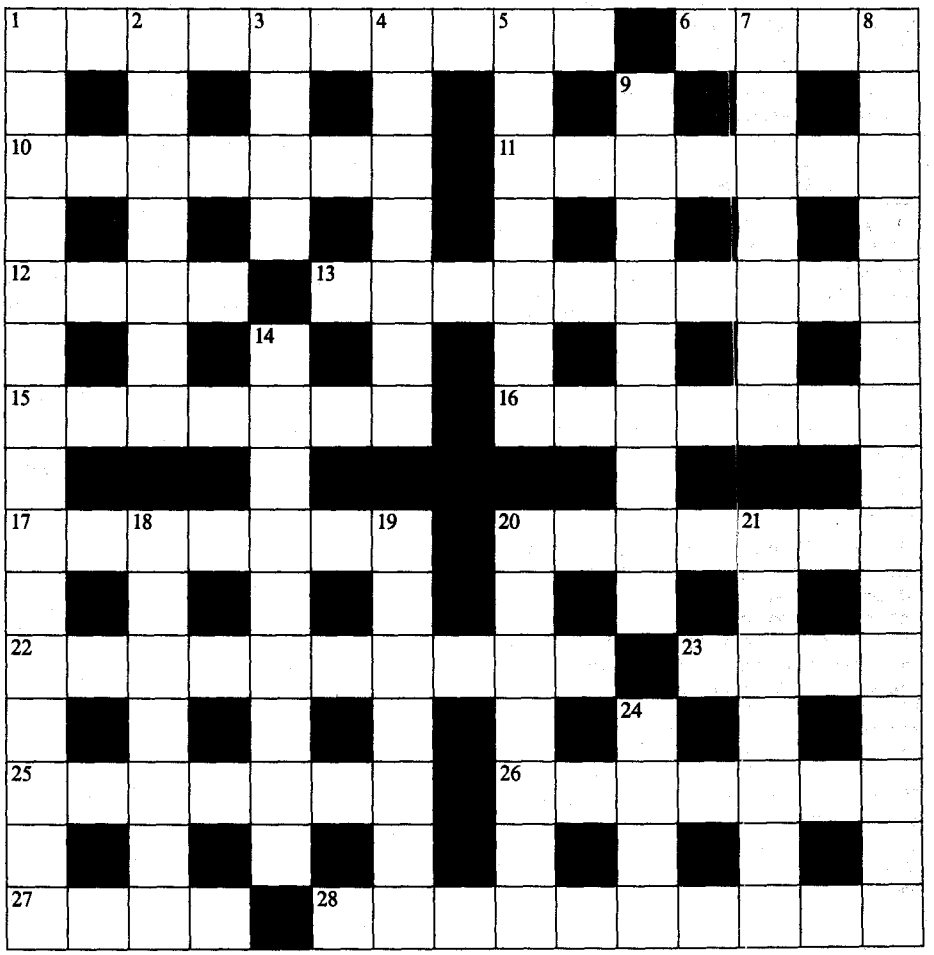

ACROSS

1 What was traditionally done on Monday carries some weight in the capital. (10)
6 It might result in a scratch. (4)
10 One or two, for example, things which make one insensitive. (7)
11 Ailment bad food causes. (7)
12 Whole these are clever; half aren't. (4)
13 Did he think the British were real comers? (4,6)
15 Not all of Aries were used in defense as they said poetically over which we watched. (7)
16 Things that have been this were testified. (5,2)
17 Coming out like *The Nation*? (7)
20 What a hunt-and-peck typist does blind, if one does it to your eyes. (4,3)
22 If writing has it, you can read it! (10)
23 Eyesore caused by the pen-point? (4)
25 Game that is sort of bent with everything. (7)
26 Beg the little devil to have some knowledge! (7)
27 Beer commonly used in a weightless 1 across. (4)
28 A kind of string in North America, for example, being dependent on this. (10)

DOWN

1 A 14 chain? (Reel up, draw up, with such as that of Langerhans.) (8,7)
2 6 across could be one of rash beginnings. (7)
3 Time to change for some thing. (4)
4 One finds a type of psychology in the strangest alternatives! (7)
5 More like fortune tellers, but not exactly so clear. (7)
7 Get the opposite of here out at this place. (7)
8 A foul blow if you do. (3,5,3,4)
9 They might be all shot up in July, but what Prometheus discovered has some effect. (9)
14 In a sense, waters an old Indian vegetable. (9)
18 Express longing over Senator Kennedy as it may be seen. (7)
19 The astronomer needs a short four quarts and one sign of MGM. (7)
20 A well-publicized missile, suggesting an Irish brawl. (7)
21 Exit the wrong way to, as a result. (7)
24 Certainly not close, having nothing to write, metaphorically. (4)

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